BS 500 .M4 1892
Mead, Charles Marsh, 1836-
1911.
Christ and criticism

CHRIST AND CRITICISM

THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE RELATION

OF

CHRISTIAN FAITH

TO

BIBLICAL CRITICISM

BY

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NEW YORK

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY

(INCORPORATED)

182 FIFTH AVENUE

PREFACE.

THE following treatise is in part an expansion of the last chapter of my work on *Supernatural Revelation.* I have been the more moved to write it inasmuch as, in spite of what might well seem to be clear enough statements, my views have been misapprehended by some, and have been represented as hostile to the higher criticism. Lest the present work should make the same impression, let me at the outset emphatically say that I regard the higher criticism as not only entirely legitimate, but as very useful, and indiscriminate condemnation of it as foolish. Genuine criticism is nothing but the search after truth; and of this there cannot be too much.

On the other hand, higher critics and their champions are scarcely less foolish when they denounce every animadversion made on their methods or their alleged results as an illicit infringement on freedom of research. Surely the right to criticise a critic's theories is as sacred as the right of the critic to propound them. The higher criticism, like all other good things is capable of abuse; and every one has a right to say when he thinks such an abuse has been committed.

The special object of the following discussion is to aid in the general work of getting at the truth as regards the Bible, by setting forth how far the authority of Jesus Christ should properly be allowed to modify, or to regulate, the process of Biblical criticism. Whatever may be thought of the result which has been reached, it should be distinctly understood that the object has been, not to oppose criticism, but to help it.

Inasmuch as it has now become known to the public that the pseudonymous work, *Romans Dissected*, by E. D. McRealsham (in German, *Der Römerbrief beurtheilt und geviertheilt* von Carl Hesedamm), was written by myself, I may properly here say a word concerning the object of it. Though some friendly critics have spoken of it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of the analysis of the Pentateuch, I can hardly assent to such a judgment. The fact that the Epistle to the Romans may be dissected in an ironical way does not *prove* that a similar dissection of the Pentateuch, seriously undertaken, is equally baseless. It is possible that there are more cogent reasons for postulating the composite character of the Pentateuch than that of Romans. This is itself a matter for candid critics to consider.

Other critics of the book have regarded it as aimed solely at the radical critics of the New Testament, such as Professor Steck, who denies the genuineness even of the Epistle to the Romans. This is also only in part correct. Over against those who seriously contest the genuineness of the book an ironical essay to prove its spuriousness can obviously have little weight. The real object of *Romans Dissected* was not so much to refute any particular theory concerning either the

Old Testament or the New, as to show in general that a critical disintegration of a book by a mere inspection of its contents, style, and linguistic characteristics, unconfirmed by external testimony, cannot be depended on as giving us the truth — or, in fact, anything more than plausible conjecture — concerning the date and authorship of the book. And this object may, I think, be regarded as gained.

THE AUTHOR.

December, 1892.

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CHRIST AND CRITICISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE SEARCH AFTER ASSURANCE.

It is one of the prominent features of Christian thought at the present time that men are striving to find a ground of assurance for the faith that is in them. It is one thing to have certain beliefs, quite another to be able to justify those beliefs over against doubts and objections. One's faith may come (as in most cases it does and must come) from tradition. As soon, however, as the faith is questioned, and one is forced to make known what ground he has for assurance of faith, he may be quite at a loss what to say. What he has implicitly accepted may seem to be without any sure foundation. A bold challenge or a plausible objection may be enough to confound the traditional faith which has been cherished.

Is there, then, a ground of certainty in matters of religious belief? On the one hand, the nature of this belief is such that certitude is extremely desirable; on the other, the great diversity of religious

faiths makes it obvious that not all of them can be grounded on an impregnable basis. Yet all naturally wish to feel an assurance of being in the right. It is reasonable to desire to be sure of the correctness of one's religious faith. To have to say, "I believe so and so, but perhaps the truth is quite otherwise", implies a faith so wavering that it can hardly nerve one to great effort or have a moulding effect on one's character. It is not strange, therefore, that Christian theologians of various types haves sought to find a ground of assurance for their religious faith.

I. Let us, then, first consider the principal methods pursued in justifying this assurance.

1. The Roman Catholic doctrine. If the Church, as represented by the Councils or by the Pope, is infallible, then Christians of every grade of intelligence may safely rest in what this authority propounds as truth. Whoever can implicitly accept the Papal utterances as the final word, whenever human judgments are at variance with one another, may enjoy a perfect sense of assurance. But the question cannot well be suppressed: How does one come to the assurance that the Pope is infallible? The Roman Catholic child is instructed to believe this; but when he comes to inquire on what ground he accepts the doctrine, there presents itself a troublesome difficulty. The Pope's infallibility was affirmed by the majority of a Council of bishops and cardinals. Even if the minority vote is cast aside as of no weight, we are still confronted with the consideration that we cannot regard that vote as establishing the truth of the doctrine of the Pope's infallibility, unless we first assume the infallibility of the Council which proclaimed it.

The question has then to be answered: Whence comes the assurance of the infallibility of the Council? And the answer must be, either that the Council affirms its own infallibility, or that some other trustworthy authority affirms it. In the former case the difficulty cannot but be felt that a bare assertion of its own infallibility is no proof of it. In the latter case the question arises, where is the proof that the tradition which affirms the infallibility of the Council is itself absolutely trustworthy? The parent or teacher or pastor from whom the child first receives the affirmation cannot be regarded as infallible; and by tracing the tradition further back through a long line of parents, teachers, and pastors the case is not bettered.

Clearly, to one in doubt as to the validity of religious doctrines no repose of faith can come from such bare assertions or claims of infallibility on the part of teacher, Council, or Pope. There must be something to back up these affirmations, else they will seem to be dictated by foolish arrogance. And there *is* something back of the assertions. There is the assumption that Christ, who founded the Christian Church, promised and effectually secured to it the possession of the truth, and that there must be some means of deciding, amidst the variety of opinions, what the real truth is. It is held that Christ delegated to his apostles the right and power to interpret his doctrines, and that the apostles handed down this power to their successors.

The real source of divine truth is thus found in Christ. The New Testament, as coming directly or mediately from the apostles, is accepted as authori-

tative. The oral teachings of the apostles, as handed down through ecclesiastical tradition, are held to be of co-ordinate authority with the Scriptures. Moreover, the Scriptures themselves being largely obscure to the ordinary mind, there is need (it is said) of an authoritative interpretation of them; and this interpretation can be found only in those who have been authoritatively commissioned by Christ and his apostles to act as interpreters. Practically, therefore, though not theoretically, the word of the Popes and the Councils and the ecclesiastical authorities supersedes the Scriptures. According to Roman Catholic doctrine no individual can appeal to Scripture as against Pope and Council, since the Pope and Council are authorized to interpret Scripture, and the private interpretation must yield to the authorized one. Thus while the Pope claims to be only the vicar of Christ, and Christ is recognized as being the supreme Head, in reality the Roman Catholic's *assurance* in religious matters comes from his faith in the authority of the Pope as the infallible interpreter of the mind of Christ and of the Scriptures. Here is the main difference between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. Both acknowledge Christ as Saviour and as authoritative Teacher. They disagree as regards the means by which the knowledge of Christ is mediated.

The weak point in the Roman Catholic doctrine is found in the assumption concerning the delegation of infallibility not only to the apostles, but to an indefinite line of successors. Where is the proof that such infallible authority has been thus delegated? Should it be said that ecclesiastical tradition asserts

the fact of such a commission from Christ to his episcopal successors, it is sufficient to reply that the proof of this assertion is wholly wanting at just the point where it is most needed, viz., as regards the first century of the Christian Church. Where is the evidence that the apostles were to have successors at all? All that specifically distinguishes them from other Christians, according to the New Testament, is their special appointment by Christ, and their fitness to serve as direct witnesses of Christ's words and works, and particularly of his resurrection. No alleged successors of later centuries can have these qualifications; and there is not a shred of evidence in the New Testament, or in any other authentic source, that the apostles were commissioned to delegate their authority to a line of successors. That such a notion sprang up later is true; and that it has been transmitted is true; but all this does not supply the missing link of the argument; still less does it authenticate the infallibility of the Pope — a doctrine not officially sanctioned till the present century. It is therefore like leaning on a broken reed, when one's assurance of faith is made to depend on such alleged infallibility.

2. The rationalistic doctrine. The rationalist finds all external authority fallible, and concludes that the only means of arriving at an assurance of faith is to follow the light of one's own reason. True belief, he argues, can exist only when one sees *reason* for believing; and of this one must be his own judge. Other men may contribute information and use arguments; but only one's own reason can yield assent, and this assent must be an intelligent and voluntary

act, the result of inward conviction, not a blind acceptance of another's person's dictum.

Now it is true that in some sense a man's reason and conscience must independently accept, as authoritative, whatever or whoever is taken as the standard of truth. A Roman Catholic must have some *reason* for regarding the Pope as infallible. If his reason is not convinced that there is really such an authority, then he cannot exercise implicit confidence in the Papal utterances, and therefore can have no assurance of faith in them. So if one makes the Bible the ultimate and inerrant source of authority in religious things, he must have a reason for such faith in the Bible. In short, whatever may be taken as an infallible guide, unless the faith is a purely blind faith, and therefore no genuine, intelligent faith at all, the individual reason must be active and decisive in the choice which is made of the authority to be followed.

But the case before us is that of him who recognizes no external authority at all as infallible, and who looks solely to his own rational and spiritual intuitions and judgments as his ground of assurance respecting religious truth. Such a man finds all external authorities fallible. He regards it as an unworthy surrender of personal independence to resign to some one else the right to dictate what he shall believe. He sees no way to *assurance* but through personal *conviction*; and such conviction must be the free action of the mind responding to the facts set before it.

But what each rationalist claims for himself he must concede to others. If one man, by the exercise

of his reason, comes to a fixed conclusion and to a comfortable assurance of faith, another man, by the exercise of *his* reason, comes to a very *different* conclusion, and yet has an equally confident assurance. But the very fact of the endless differences which are found in men's opinions is proof sufficient that the individual reason is no infallible authority; so that if any one, relying simply on his own reason, feels a perfect confidence in the faith which he has wrought out, he is logically bound to affirm his reason to be *the* reason by which all others ought to be regulated. But this would be an abandonment of the fundamental principle of rationalism. And it clearly follows that absolute dependence on the individual reason cannot rationally furnish a ground of assurance of faith.

3. The mystical doctrine. This is a modification of the foregoing. The mystic finds his ultimate authority in an immediate divine inspiration or communication. But even if the alleged inspiration could be distinguished from the deliverances of the reason, the practical difficulty presents itself here as in the case of the rationalist, that the individual inspirations, since they are not harmonious with one another, cannot all be infallible, and consequently none of them can be depended on implicitly. But there is the further difficulty, that there can be no sure line drawn between the alleged inspiration and the simple verdict of the reason. Processes of reasoning are often rapid and scarcely manifest themselves in the consciousness. A judgment formed suddenly on the ground of facts known may seem like a direct inspiration. A mere impulse, not traceable to any definite

previous process of thought, may be called an inspiration, though really nothing but an individual conceit or whim. Manifestly such a pretended source of infallible direction is anything but infallible; and an assurance of faith resting on it is without a solid foundation.

4. The Protestant doctrine. According to this the Bible is to be regarded as of divine and infallible authority. But here too it is no easy task to justify to doubters, or even to ourselves, the validity of this assumption. Before the Bible is accepted as the ultimate authority, the individual must somehow be persuaded to accept it as such. This persuasion may be merely an unquestioning faith in the credibility of one's instructors. Or it may be a conviction resulting from a consideration of the arguments that are urged in defense of the doctrine of Biblical infallibility. In the former case the persuasion, so far as it rests simply on faith in the assertions of one's elders, has no more valid basis than any transmitted superstition, unless it can be shown that the parents or teachers themselves have a solid reason for their faith. And so we are brought to the second ground of the faith, and inquire whether the reasons for it are sufficient to justify one in resting on the Bible as absolutely infallible.

Now as to the doctrine of Biblical infallibility it is obvious that it cannot be maintained on the ground that its propositions, like those of mathematics, compel universal assent. On the contrary, the Bible is accepted as authoritative only by a part of those who know it; and even multitudes of those who prize it most highly think that it contains errors. From

the very nature of the case, moreover, it cannot be demonstrated that a book of history is inerrant, unless we can go back to the sources of information and verify all the statements, and thus make it certain that the book is free from mistakes. But such a verification is for the most part impossible. How can any one directly prove that the stories about Abraham, Samson, or David are all authentic? It is not enough to say that they cannot be proved to be incorrect. For we are now dealing with the problem of certitude: how can men be *assured* that the Bible gives them an infallible body of religious history and doctrine? In general, all histories are assumed to be more or less imperfect. It is not claimed for them that they are inerrant. The presumption always is that errors creep into the most conscientiously prepared works. This presumption must, in the case of the Bible, be overthrown, if it is to be made out to be an exception in respect to infallibility. Now it plainly cannot be overthrown by a detailed demonstration that all the statements of the Bible are strictly true; such a demonstration is impossible. Some other method of treatment must be resorted to, or the presumption against the strict infallibility of the Bible must stand.

And accordingly the proof of the inerrancy of the Bible is attempted in another way. It is argued that we have evidence that the book is so peculiarly inspired that it can be absolutely trusted. This argument rests ultimately on the assumption that a divine revelation has been made, and that in order to make it effectual the written embodiment of it must be free from error. It is assumed that there is a God,

that God is infallible, and that he must have secured a faultless expression of his will and ways. The argument for Biblical infallibility rests on the prior assumption of the divine infallibility. And the case is similar, if we put Jesus Christ in the place of God in the argument. When it is argued that we may assume the apostles to have been inspired because Jesus promised that they should be inspired, the argument is valid only as we assume the supernatural power and absolute trustworthiness of Jesus. Unless he is antecedently assumed to be an infallible authority, this argument for the authority of the Bible is inconclusive. The same can be said of this as of the Roman Catholic argument for the infallibility of the Pope. In either case the authority is supposed to be a delegated one: Christ is supposed in the one case to have delegated his authority to a succession of living representatives; in the other he is supposed to have delegated to certain men the right and power to communicate a faultless record of his gospel to the world. In either case the ultimate authority is assumed to be the Lord Jesus himself.

5. This brings us then to the last of the principal methods by which religious assurance is sought. Christ, it is said, is the ultimate authority for all Christians, so that we need not anxiously attempt to defend the exact accuracy of every part of the Bible. If we believe in him and follow him, we can safely let criticism have free range, and not be troubled at any discoveries it may make of defects and mistakes in the Biblical writers. As Christians we put our supreme faith in Christ, not in the utterances of any of his followers. Inasmuch as the ultimate ground

of our faith in the authority of the Bible is our faith in the authority of Christ, nothing is gained, while much may be lost, by attempting to defend, as absolutely infallible, everything found in the books of the Bible. Why not, it is urged, leave the Bible to be freely judged according to its merits, since the foundation of our faith in any case does not rest upon it, but upon Him of whom it treats?

This seems, therefore, to be the only defensible ground on which one can rest when assurance of Christian faith is sought. Christ is the object of a Christian's faith; and however much he may find that is questionable in the Christian Scriptures, this faith can remain undisturbed. Those who take this position, it may be said, are not exposed to the objection which confronts the rationalist: that the differences among the several individuals who find in their reason the ultimate standard of truth show that the individual reason cannot be the trustworthy standard. Christ, as standing above all men, is accepted as the one authority by which the aberrations of the individual reason are to be corrected. They also escape the objection that can be urged against the Papal doctrine: that a mere man, chosen by other men to be the authoritative exponent of Christ's will cannot rationally be depended on as infallible. Both the Protestant and the Roman Catholic doctrine ultimately rest on the assumption of the supreme, infallible authority of Christ. The Bible on the one hand and the Pope on the other are admitted to be infallible only because Christ is first accepted as the supreme authority. Why, then, rest our faith on the secondary, derivative ground rather than on the primary one?

Here, then, we seem to have an impregnable position, and one which enables us calmly to await and accept whatever scientific investigation may bring to light as regards the history or the character of the Bible. And if any one of these five positions is to be adopted as the exclusive one, the latter certainly is to be preferred to any of the others. But it is manifest that we are after all not at the end of our search. For the question at once forces itself upon us: *On what ground is Jesus Christ himself accepted as an infallible authority?* Have we any direct intuition, like a sixth sense, which informs us that he is what he has been reported to be? Is there anything self-evident in the proposition, that Jesus of Nazareth is one who can be absolutely trusted? Such a claim can hardly be made in view of the fact that only a minority of mankind, and not even all of those who know about him, assent to the doctrine of his spiritual authority. Surely, then, those who profess to believe in his authority as an ultimate and faultless standard ought to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them.

II. How, then, can Christians reasonably justify to themselves or to others their certitude of faith in Jesus Christ? How does the faith originate? On what grounds does it rest? In answer to these questions we need to consider the actual experience of those who cherish a hearty faith in Christ.

1. In the first instance Christ is brought before one's mind, as an object of faith, by tradition. The child, or the heathen, or the unbeliever, is told of Jesus as a Saviour, believes the testimony, and then personally exercises faith in the Saviour thus made

known. This is in accordance with the usual method of acquiring knowledge. For nearly everything we learn we depend on the testimony of other men. That the earth moves around the sun, that Milton wrote the Paradise Lost — such propositions are accepted in most cases on the mere ground of testimony. It is assumed of course that there were good reasons for the original propagation of such propositions; but what those reasons were, most people do not undertake to find out, and could not if they would. It is simply a necessity of human life to take on trust a great part of what we learn, whether the knowledge relates to history, natural science, or religion.

There is accordingly always a presumption in favor of what is handed down by tradition. Very often indeed it may turn out to be an untrustworthy tradition; but the presumption is in its favor until it is disproved. And when careful research has proved it to be a mistake, this *new* proposition, being communicated from one to another, becomes in its turn a *tradition* which in general is taken on trust just as the previous erroneous one had been. Nothing, therefore, can be more inconsiderate than to assert or imply that any proposition is to be distrusted, if one's faith in it rests only on tradition. Life would not be worth living, if men were allowed to take nothing on trust, but were obliged to trace every alleged truth back to its ultimate ground.

And in the case of Christianity the evidence of tradition has peculiar force, because it has come down in an unbroken line, has penetrated many different races, has broken down ancient superstitions and religions, has not only maintained itself amongst the

most enlightened nations, but has been the source of enlightenment wherever it has been carried. It had no obscure origin, but sprang up in a civilized age, and at once found its way into acceptance among the most civilized peoples. It is a tradition, moreover, which has been transmitted by an organized body, the Christian Church. It is a tradition which holds the Church together. There is, therefore, an immense presumption in favor of the correctness of the fundamental propositions to which this tradition bears witness. Christianity is something which at all events should be assumed to be true until the opposite is demonstrated.

But tradition *may* after all be misleading. In order to full assurance of faith something more may be required than the mere fact that a weighty tradition justifies it. And there is more. For—

2. Christian *experience* confirms the truth of the tradition. Since Christianity is not put forth as a mere fact of history or science, but as a system of facts and truths that are designed to have a great and salutary effect on the character and lives of men, it is pertinent to ask whether the intended effect is produced. If it is not, then this failure would go far towards weakening the presumption in favor of the truthfulness of the tradition. If it is, then this fulfilment of the professed object of Christianity becomes a powerful witness for the rightfulness of its claims.

And this evidence is found in large measure. Wherever Christ is heartily embraced and trusted, there results inward purity and peace. This faith puts a check upon selfishness, rescues men from the power of vicious tastes and habits, nerves them to

bear suffering and persecution with patience and cheerfulness, gives comfort in times of sorrow and adversity, and makes the sinner a new man through the consciousness of being made a child of God and heir of eternal life. The proffer of forgiveness to the penitent, the revelation of the divine love and the exhibition of that love in the human life of the Son of God, the promise of constant aid from the Spirit of God in the contest with sinful affections — this is something that meets the wants of men; it commends itself to their faith; and when experience has confirmed the hopes created by the promises of the gospel, the presumption in its favor which came from the external testimony becomes transformed into a joyful assurance, so that believers can say, with the townsmen of the Samaritan woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking; for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world".

Now this evidence of Christian experience is manifestly of immense weight. If it were the evidence furnished by a single or a very limited experience, it would be easy to attribute it to a pleasing delusion. Fancy and fanaticism can do wonderful things in transforming men; and Christianity, even though apparently doing good, might still be supposed to be nothing more than a happy fiction which stimulates and elevates men. Just as a novel may instruct and help one, even though known to be a fictitious work, so and still more the story of Christ might do good, especially when (as is the fact) it is supposed to be true.

But it is quite another thing when the faith in

question is shared by a vast multitude and serves as a bond of union among them. One man's experience is confirmed by that of others. The suspicion that the belief and the results of it may have come from an illusion is dissipated when it is found that communities and nations accept the same doctrines and are moved and elevated by faith in the same Jesus.

This evidence does not cover all the experiences and beliefs which have been called Christian. But it does cover the great central fact of the commanding influence and supreme authority of Christ and the uniqueness of character and function which the Christian Church has always ascribed to him. The argument, in brief, is this: Christianity is a beneficent institution; it has been handed down from generation to generation as of divine origin; the life and sayings of its Founder have been preserved and communicated; and the truth of the tradition is confirmed by the beneficence of its effects. The Church has a right to assume that what has maintained itself so long and has proved its worthiness by the experience of vast multitudes is to be accepted as a settled fact. And individuals who have found themselves blessed and saved by their faith in Christ have a right to cherish unwavering confidence that their faith has an impregnable foundation.

Still it is possible to object that all this beneficent effect of Christianity might conceivably come from a false faith *believed to be true.* When a man repents of sin and enjoys the inspiration of thinking that God has forgiven him, might not the assurance of forgiveness be just as helpful in case the Christian doctrine is a pleasant fiction as it is on the supposition

of its being solid truth? At the best, in one's spiritual experiences one can be *conscious* only of what one's own self feels, thinks, hopes, resolves, etc. If the Christian portrayal of Christ and of the divine character and doings is only *thought* to be true, might not all that is alleged to have come as the result of Christianity in respect of inward peace, deliverance from the burden of guilt, the awakening of benevolent feeling, etc., have come also from a piously and skilfully devised fiction?

The first and obvious answer to such an insinuation is that, even if such a thing were conceivable, there is an overwhelming presumption against its being the fact. In the face of a long-standing tradition, contended against at the outset, but maintaining itself through all these centuries and proving its truth by its power to regenerate human character, it can avail little to say that all this *may* be a baseless fancy. Until it is *proved* to be a mere fancy, it must stand as historic truth. So far, however, from this proof's being forthcoming, just the opposite is established by the appeal to history. This brings us to the third ground of assurance on which the Christian faith rests.

3. Christianity rests on a solid basis of historic fact. The Christian Scriptures furnish the proof that Christ and his gospel were no fiction, but well attested realities. The writers were either contemporaries and witnesses of the events narrated, or else were associated with those who were witnesses.

The New Testament is an integral part of Christian tradition. The gospel was indeed at first,

as a matter of course, proclaimed orally. The Christian Church was established before the New Testament was written. But what was thus orally transmitted was soon put into the more fixed and less corruptible form of written records, which present us a sketch of the life and sayings of Christ and the body of truth which his disciples derived therefrom. The oral transmission of Christian truth still continued, and it continues to this day. But the written records have also been transmitted as the authoritative exposition of the essential facts and truths of the gospel. The oral tradition, however much it may have added to the written, or even corrupted it, has never avowedly contradicted it. This has always been acknowledged as authoritative, and has become more and more indispensable, the farther removed men are from the beginnings of Christian history. It has had to serve as a check upon the vagaries of fancy, upon the distortions of fact and of doctrine which would inevitably spring up, were there no such fixed standard and ultimate court of appeal.

Thus, then, we have the threefold cord of evidence that furnishes the warrant of assurance of faith in Jesus Christ. And the warrant is stronger than that which can be adduced for the greater part of what men surely believe. The most of what is called historic or scientific knowledge rests simply on what are supposed to be credible records of historic or scientific facts. These records relate to matters with which one's personal experience has little or nothing to do, and receive, therefore, no confirmation from such experience. Nor is there any tradition that goes before and prepares the way for faith in the written

records. The faith rests practically on the bare written record alone. The great mass of human knowledge has no other foundation than this. There are indeed many traditions which filter down through the generations, some more, some less, trustworthy. There are superstitions, and there are distorted accounts of ancient events, which serve to amuse or harrow the feelings, but which are left to be transmitted as they may be, continually modified by the imagination, having no root in well-attested ancient records and having nothing to do with the serious affairs of life. The Christian tradition, on the contrary, is transmitted by a compact and intelligent body — the Christian Church. It is communicated to each new generation as a precious heritage. It is inculcated, moreover, as something the truth and value of which is to be verified by personal experience, by a regenerating and beatifying effect on the life. And then back of all this there is a well-attested authentic ancient historic record, vouching for the genuineness of the events and truths which constitute the basis of the Christian life.

These three grounds of assurance confirm one another and cannot be dissociated. Christian experience begins by laying hold of that which Christian tradition brings before us. It is a continuous reproduction, in each new generation or in hitherto unchristianized nations, of the faith that is handed down. But the tradition itself is indissolubly connected with the Biblical record as its earliest traceable form and its permanent embodiment. The tradition authenticates itself by means of the record; and accordingly

the written history, though itself supported in turn by the continuous experience of the Church, is, among the evidences for Christianity, the ultimate and decisive factor. Christian assurance stands or falls with the verification of the New Testament Scriptures.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND NEW TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

THE opinion is frequently expressed that the critical study of the Scriptures is something so entirely distinct from faith in Christ that the one cannot determine the other. The critical process, it is said, may take any course it will, and yet the Christian faith remain undisturbed. The faith being purely a spiritual act, having to do with the present living Christ, and literary criticism being a purely scientific process, dealing with the characteristics and composition of ancient books, the two things, it is said, should be kept entirely distinct. Criticism may, therefore, it is thought, have a perfectly free range and reach any results whatever, without endangering Christian faith.[1]

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[1] This seems to be the obvious meaning of the following passage in a recent work (Orello Cone: *Gospel Criticism and Historical Christianity*, p. 319): "Now although the invalidation of the Gospels would not indeed destroy Christianity, for it is indestructible, he who subjects them to a free handling and reconstruction may well be called upon to give an account of his results, whether there remain a kernel or a husk". Similarly Prof. G. F. Moore (*Andover Review*, vol. x. p. 339) says, "Reconciliation to God in Christ through the forgiveness of

This has a re-assuring sound. For certainly Christianity itself is of more consequence than any particular book that treats of Christianity. And if we are sure of maintaining the chief thing, we can afford to be indifferent about the other. But we do not need to think long, before we find that the case is not so clear as it is represented to be.

How do we come to know that Christ is a person worthy of implicit faith? It will not do to answer that we have received the assurance from our elders and teachers. This only raises the further question, How did they and all preceding generations obtain the assurance? How did Peter, John, and the other original disciples of Christ come to believe in him as the sinless Son of God? Our only evidence is that of history; and the historical evidence is found in the New Testament. Traditions distinct from everything there found, even if we had them, could not be regarded as possessing any substantial value, unless they could be historically traced to their sources and their correctness verified. But such a verification would be, in the present case, quite impracticable. Moreover, the tradition that we do have is to the effect that the New Testament contains the true account of the origin of Christianity. If these writings are authentic, they contain the substance of what is to be believed about Christ; if they are unauthentic, then we are left wholly to vague conjecture, when we try to determine who and what Jesus Christ was.

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sins — this, the heart of the gospel, is the absolute in Christianity, which no discoveries in science, no historical research, no intellectual enlightenment, no moral or religious progress, can touch".

So much seems to be indisputable. But what follows? Certainly this follows: that if destructive criticism is able to invalidate the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament, it thereby *overthrows the foundations of the Christian faith.* It would not indeed disprove the historical facts of Christianity; it would not destroy whetever good has come directly or indirectly from the adoption of the Christian faith. But it would prove that that faith is without any valid right to be. It would show that our conceptions of Christ are largely, if not wholly, legendary and false. The very foundations of Christianity would be knocked away. Any one who after this should continue to hold the traditional view concerning the unique character and mission of Christ could do so only by bidding defiance to all the dictates of historical evidence and sound common sense. Plainly, therefore, it cannot be truly said that faith in Christ is in such a sense independent of faith in the Bible that it would stand unimpaired, even though the Gospel narratives and the apostolic testimony concerning him should be proved to be without any historical value. On the contrary, if, as some critics have maintained, the New Testament is wholly untrustworthy, and we therefore practically know nothing about Jesus Christ, then it would be pure fatuity to assert that criticism cannot disturb the foundations of Christianity.

We seem, then, to have arrived at a conclusion the opposite of that before accepted; that is, we seem to make Christian faith depend on faith in the credibility of the New Testament. How shall the apparent contradiction be removed? For certainly both propo-

sitions seem to be justifiable. It has become almost a platitude to say that Christianity was founded before there was any New Testament, and that therefore the original faith in Christ could not have depended on faith in the New Testament, but was rather a faith exercised directly towards Jesus himself. This is of course indisputable. And it is also true that to this day faith in Christ is instilled into the young or the unlettered before they are able to appreciate the arguments for or against the authenticity of the New Testament.

The apparent contradiction is not removed by affirming that the general result of critical study is to confirm the credibility of the Gospels. It may be true that thus far the weight of scholarly judgment favors the assumption of the substantial veracity of the New Testament. But the more one lays stress on this, the more it is insisted that critical research has established the trustworthiness of the Christian Scriptures, so much the more is it thereby confessed that it is an important thing to make out that the New Testament writers are truthful historians; in other words, it is confessed that Christian faith in some sense does depend on the assurance that the New Testament tells the truth. Indeed, if there were not such a conviction on the part of Christian scholars, why should they have devoted so much time and strength to the work of defending the authenticity of the sacred books? If Christianity is perfectly secure, and Christ, as the object of our faith, is so well known and so absolutely superior to all the assaults of skeptical critics, why spend so much energy in defending that which we should never feel the loss of? It is one thing

proudly to affirm that the Christian Scriptures never can be invalidated; it is quite another, to affirm that, even if they should be invalidated, Christianity would still be undisturbed.

We have, therefore, still to answer the question, how we are to reconcile the two seemingly irreconcilable propositions: that faith in Christ is anterior to faith in the New Testament, and that a critical undermining of the credibility of the New Testament would necessarily carry with it the overthrow of Christianity.

The question can perhaps be best answered by making use of an analogy. George Washington is reputed to have been the most prominent actor in the revolution which resulted in the establishment of the independence of the United States. So conspicuous was he, and so vital apparently his agency in accomplishing the work undertaken, that he has been called the Father of his country. Now supposing the general impression about the man to be correct, we must assume that those who lived with him, those who fought under him, and those who with him deliberated concerning the adoption of the new Constitution, knew him and had faith in him. And this knowledge and confidence was the result of direct personal acquaintance or else of the oral testimony of those who did know him personally. This acquaintance with him and esteem of him was of course not the result of any written history of him or of his times; for none was yet written. But since then such histories have appeared, and now, after the lapse of a century, these histories are the principal, we may say, practically the only, source of our definite knowledge about

Washington and his career. And the earlier those records are, the more trustworthy are they. No one depends on transmitted oral testimony — on the uncertain accuracy of human memory, especially when many links intervene between him and the person or event told about — as bearing any comparison in point of trustworthiness with the records that were written soon after the time in question and have been preserved.

Now let us suppose that Marshall's Life of Washington were the only history of those times left to us, that all earlier and contemporary records used by him have perished, so that we depend for our knowledge of Washington on that Life and on whatever oral tradition there may still be concerning him. Manifestly the oral tradition would be regarded as of small account. The written Life would be the storehouse of information on which all would depend. But let us suppose further that critical scholars should examine Marshall's work, and make out that it is utterly fabulous — that the whole story about Washington is legendary, and that we are left without any trustworthy information about him. If such a critical judgment should be established, if the historical value of the Life were effectually overthrown, then as rational men we should have to say that the traditional notions about Washington are false, that the enthusiastic admiration that has been bestowed on him is entirely misplaced, and that we have no right to regard him as the hero that he has had the name of being, even if we believe that the man ever lived at all.

It would avail nothing to say that Washington's

contemporaries admired and trusted him during his lifetime, that they depended not on books, but on personal acquaintance, for their judgment of the man, and that we may do the same on the strength of their testimony, independently of written histories. The question at once arises. How do we *know* that Washington's contemporaries were led by their personal acquaintance to esteem him so highly? Is it not through these very histories which we profess to regard as unessential to our faith in the man? If those histories themselves are entirely invalidated, then with them goes all valid reason for our believing in Washington, or for thinking that his contemporaries believed in him, as being what he has currently been reputed to be. In short, tradition, popular impressions, cannot be set up as capable of outweighing a critical demonstration of the incredibility of all the written histories; for the histories must have reflected the popular impressions of the times in which they originated; and if the histories are false, the popular impressions must have been false also.

The application of this analogy is obvious. Washington and what he did are, it is true, of vastly more account than the narratives of him and his doings. The narratives are only means to an end — the end being our acquaintance with the man and with the events connected with him. So (only in a much higher degree) Christ and our relation to him are much more important than the written records of his life. Yet it is only through tradition, whether written or oral, that we know of him. And if these disagree with each other, the written is to be preferred. If they agree, and the written is proved to be false, then

we simply know nothing about him. In short, *faith in the man and faith in the history of the man go together and cannot be disjoined.* It cannot, therefore, be said of criticism, that, inasmuch as it is concerned only with the origin and composition of the early books, it can in no way affect the Christian faith. In so far as it invalidates the New Testament, it invalidates Christian faith; for that faith is necessarily bound together with the earliest records of Christ and his life. Accordingly it is not strange that Christians should look on with some concern, when critics threaten to undermine the authenticity of the Christian records. True, no one should be afraid of facts; and if the facts are contrary to what has been supposed, we should be ready to abandon our faith; but it cannot reasonably be contended that we may properly adhere to our faith in spite of a proof that we have been entirely mistaken as to the object of it.

Faith, therefore, is by no means independent of criticism. If critics overthrow the trustworthiness of the New Testament, they overthrow Christianity, unless men persist in believing what there is no ground for believing. But a Christian is one who is firmly assured of the truth of what he believes respecting Jesus Christ and Christian doctrine. Can, then, a *Christian* critic be conceived as holding that there is no historical foundation for Christianity? And if not, then it is pertinent to consider the more general question, How far and in what sense does Christian faith limit or determine the course of criticism as it relates to the New Testament books?

Sometimes the opinion is expressed that in a critical examination of the Bible one should divest

himself of all prepossessions and treat the Bible just as he would any other book. Can a Christian critic do this? Ought he to do it? On the contrary, it must be insisted that a Christian, just because he is a Christian, cannot but have a prepossession; he ought to have a prepossession in favor of the peculiar value of the Scriptures. If he has not such a prepossession, he is not in a genuine sense a Christian at all. As a Christian, he must have an implicit faith in Jesus Christ. His faith in Christ comes through the New Testament, or through those whose faith directly or indirectly rests on the statements found in the New Testament. A peculiar faith in the credibility of the New Testament is presupposed in Christian faith itself. As already observed, those Scriptures cannot be discredited without destroying the foundations of Christianity. Consequently a Christian must come to the study of the New Testament with the conviction that it gives a correct account of Christ and Christian truth. But how far shall this presumption be carried? How far does faith in Christ rightly determine one's critical judgment of the New Testament? Let us go more into particulars.

1. Christian faith must involve faith in the general truthfulness of the New Testament portraiture of Christ and of his teachings. I say, in the *general* truthfulness of the New Testament. Belief in Christ as the Light of the world and the Saviour of men does not necessarily imply an acceptance of any particular theory of the origin of the Gospels or Epistles. It does not require that one believe in the peculiar inspiration or the strict inerrancy of the sacred books. However forcible the arguments may be for believing

in their inspiration and inerrancy, such a belief is not essential to a genuine faith in Christ. As one can have a firm faith in what historians relate concerning the persons and events of English history without assuming that the histories are free from all error, so with regard to the New Testament. Provided that in its main and essential features, in its principal and prominent declarations, in its natural implications, in the general impression which it leaves, it is accepted as trustworthy, there is involved no rejection of Christ as Redeemer or as Teacher in questioning the accuracy of certain minor details, or doubting whether the writers had any peculiar supernatural guidance in writing the books. This could be made essential to Christian faith only in case Christ himself had unmistakably propounded such a doctrine concerning the composition and infallibility of the New Testament.

But, it may be asked, why cannot one go so far as to question the accuracy of a considerable part of the New Testament, and yet believe in Jesus as a pre-eminently good man, or even as a divinely commissioned prophet? May not one even reject all the leading doctrines of ecclesiastical Christology, and yet derive from the New Testament such a knowledge of Christ and such a reverence for him that he may be called a true Christian?

Far be it from any one to undertake to lay down a criterion which will suffice to enable us, in every individual case, to pronounce a personal judgment as to one's Christian character. A man, as is often said, may well be better than his creed. There is hardly any limit to the inconsistencies and self-contradictions into which the human mind may be led.

But erratic and exceptional cases do not warrant us in modifying the general rule, that true faith in Christ implies and necessitates faith in the general authenticity of the New Testament writings. As has been already seen, a sweeping denial of this authenticity would be inconsistent with faith in Christ. We know nothing about him, unless the New Testament gives us a correct account of him. The same early Christians who preached Christ, and founded the Church on faith in Christ, have handed down also the New Testament with their endorsement of it as an authentic written exposition of the facts and truths which they themselves believed in. If we reject the New Testament description of Christ, we are left practically without any knowledge of him, so that it would be absurd any longer to profess to be Christians at all. So much is clear.

But the question still remains: If it is conceded that a man may be a true Christian, although he has doubts about the thorough inerrancy of the New Testament; if, therefore, one may question or reject *some* things there found, by what right can it be said that he may not reject *many* things, and yet not forfeit his right to rank as a true Christian?

Now without attempting to draw an unmistakable boundary line beyond which one's critical doubt cannot go without involving a denial of the Christian faith, some general principles may be laid down the particular application of which must be largely left to one's Christian intelligence, honesty, and common sense.

In the first place, it must be remembered that Christian faith is pre-eminently a faith that belongs

to a *community*. It springs from, and it creates, association. It is not a mere matter of private judgment. Indeed, no form of belief — not even scientific opinions — can be said to be purely individual. But Christianity, more than secular science, implies and requires a common faith as the basis of the Kingdom of God which it was Christ's aim to establish on earth. The faith is, therefore, also a communicated faith. It is handed down from one generation to another. It is implanted in one individual through the instruction and stimulus of another. It is the means of uniting together those who would otherwise have no common interest — those even whom differences of race and condition tend to separate. It creates an organization which is continuous and aims to be universal. In spite of the divisions of the Christian Church there has maintained itself from the beginning, so far as the person and mission of Christ are concerned, an essential agreement. He has from the first been regarded as the incarnate Son of God, divinely commissioned to reveal the saving love of the Father, as a preacher of righteousness, a miracle-worker, sinless, but the friend of sinners, crucified, but raised from the dead on the third day, manifested to his disciples, ascended into heaven, where he reigns as the Head of the Church which he founded. There is a general unanimity in holding that faith in him and love to him are the divinely appointed means of securing the forgiveness of sins and the promotion of true holiness, and that all Christians owe him spiritual allegiance as Lord and Master.

Moreover, this substantial accord in regard to the central object of Christian faith has been indissolubly

connected with a common consent to make the New Testament the standard of Christian truth. Whatever excrescences may here and there have grown upon the faith of Christendom have generally come from mistaken or one-sided exegesis rather than from a rejection of any part of the Biblical testimony.

Now it does not imply an adoption of the extreme Roman Catholic doctrine of ecclesiastical authority, when one maintains that a radical departure from what has been the general faith of Christendom concerning Christ does presumptively shut one out from the ranks of Christians. Every one must of course be at liberty to form his own opinions. But if the result of one's studies and reflections is to lead him to reject what has generally been held to be vital to the Christian faith — what has constituted the rallying-point, the basis of union, in the Christian Church — then it is not easy to see why either he or any one else should be concerned to vindicate for him the name of Christian. He has a right to regard his view as more correct than the Christian view; but he cannot reasonably regard it as being itself the Christian view.

In the second place, as is already implied in the foregoing, a radical departure from the New Testament representations of Christ and Christian doctrine implies a departure from Christianity itself. It is true, the question may at once be raised, what is a *radical* departure from the teachings of the New Testament? Every eccentric man who propounds some new view of Christ and rejects the ordinary doctrine may insist that precisely what he has come to believe is the vital thing in Christian belief, or at least that his diver-

gences from the ordinary notions relate to non-essential points. And at any rate it may seem to be difficult to determine when a dissent from the ordinary doctrine becomes radical. But after all there need not be any great mystification on this point. Ordinary common sense, to say nothing of the enlightenment of a Christian experience, is adequate, with regard to the Bible as with regard to any other book, to perceive what the prominent and essential doctrines are which it presents. Any one can see that it is an unimportant thing whether the inscription over Jesus' cross was worded according to one or another of the four versions which the Gospels give. And it is just as easy to see that the fact of Jesus' death is represented as most important. Any one can see that it is of small account whether Jesus healed only one maniac, or two, in the country of the Gadarenes; but it is plain that stress is laid upon the healing power of Jesus. Both believers and unbelievers would generally agree as to what the conspicuous features of New Testament doctrine are. And there is especially a very strong presumption that what Christians in general have regarded as the vital points in that doctrine is justified by the book itself.

Of course it is possible that a majority of the Christian Church may fall into error in some points of exegesis, or may attach disproportionate importance to some doctrines, to the comparative neglect of others. But it is next to inconceivable that, so far as the general grand features of the person and doctrine of Christ are concerned, the Church can have been materially wrong in what it has found the New Testament to teach. Whether, therefore, the radical

dissent from the current views comes from a peculiar exegesis, or from a wholesale rejection of such parts of the New Testament as disagree with the view which he advocates — in either case the critic who thus sets himself against what has always appeared to be the plain teaching of the Christian Scriptures cannot, with any show of reason, claim that his view is the Christian view, and the other not.

Where the dissent from the ordinary conception of the truth touches only one or a few points of Christian doctrine, and those not such as have been generally esteemed the most important, the case is different. Undoubtedly many a man may question much of what the great majority of Christians have held to be the plain teaching of the New Testament, and yet may be a devout Christian, not able to see the truth as others see it, yet honestly trying to elucidate what the Scriptures set forth concerning the person and work of Christ. Such speculations and interpretations, even though one-sided and faulty, may yet suggest defects in the ordinary doctrine, and lead ultimately to a more comprehensive and correct apprehension of Scriptural doctrine on the part of the Church in general. A variety in doctrinal belief, on the part of those who agree in their devotion to the same Saviour and in their acceptance of the same Scriptures, is to be expected wherever thought is free. Mutual charity is here dictated by Christianity itself. More harm than good comes from charges of heresy hurled against those who, while they wish to remain loyal to Christ, are yet unable to see him as others see him, or to understand the Biblical

doctrine in the usual way. Leniency of judgment should be exercised to the utmost.

But when the dissent from current views not only concerns what is generally held to be truths of central importance, but is connected with an arbitrary rejection of such Scriptural testimony as conflicts with the doctrine propounded, the dissenter cannot reasonably expect his view to be accepted as sound Christian doctrine. There certainly is a point at which the rupture with the prevailing belief becomes radical and should be regarded by the critic himself as vacating his title to the name of Christian, even though no one should accuse him of heresy. Just where this point is, it would be presumptuous to try to set forth in such specific terms that it can infallibly be determined when in every individual case the line has been overstepped. But it may serve to give greater precision to the general principle which we have laid down, if we add a second proposition, viz., that —

2. In the elucidation of the New Testament doctrine of Christ it is unwarrantable to draw one's information wholly or preponderantly from a particular part of the New Testament, to the exclusion or neglect of other parts. There are those, for example, who in their Christological studies confine themselves mostly or entirely to the Gospels, on the ground that, in seeking to learn what Jesus was and what he taught, we are on firm ground only when we are attending to his own words and deeds. Consequently the Epistles and other books are treated as at least secondary, or even as quite untrustworthy, sources of information. This is not an infrequent method of procedure. The Gospels are used as the only authen-

tic source. The Epistles are treated as if they were only the lucubrations of a later time, at which the sober descriptions of the Gospels were succeeded by exaggerations and theosophic speculations, and Jesus, instead of being regarded as the simple, godly teacher such as the Evangelists portray him, was apotheosized and invested with attributes and functions of which the more primitive record knows nothing.

There is something plausible at first blush in such a view. It sounds scientific and reasonable to say that testimony at first hand is more to be trusted than testimony at second or third hand — that a man's own representations of himself should be accepted rather than other men's representations of him. And undoubtedly the Gospels have had, and always will have, a unique value and charm, inasmuch as they report Jesus' language, describe his conduct, and give us a portrait of him in his intercourse with men. In an important sense the Gospels must always furnish the basis of every attempt to set forth the Biblical doctrine of the person of Christ. But there is no warrant for making them the exclusive source of information.

The one-sidedness of this method becomes apparent, when we observe that the Gospels are not the earliest books of the New Testament, and that the other books, as well as the Gospels, present to us the primitive apostolic conception of Christ. Why should Mark's or Luke's portraiture be preferred to Paul's? No one of the three, so far as we know, was an immediate disciple of Jesus. Luke tells us that he took pains to gather accurate information about his doings and sayings. Paul tells us (Gal. i. 12) that

he received a revelation directly from Christ himself, and that soon after his conversion he had a conference for a fortnight with Peter (i. 18), and still later with the other apostles (ii. 1—10). Wherein had Luke any advantage over Paul in the matter of learning the truth about Jesus' life and character? On the contrary, the early tradition is that Luke wrote his Gospel under Paul's superintendence. Paul, moreover, wrote some of his Epistles before any of our Gospels were written — all of them probably, before the Gospels assumed their present form. On every account, therefore, his representations of Christ and Christian truth would seem to be more trustworthy, if we are to make any distinction at all, than those of Mark or Luke.

But what of Matthew and John? Since they were apostles, are not their Gospels to be preferred to the other Gospels and to all the other New Testament books as source of information concerning Christ? So it might seem. Yet, curiously enough, those who depreciate the testimony of Paul are just the ones who are apt *not* to attach especial importance to the Gospels of Matthew and John. The First Gospel is thought to be only in part, if at all, the work of Matthew, and the Fourth is pronounced to be not John's at all, but a very late production presenting a mystic and altogether unreliable account of Jesus' words and acts. Mark is preferred to Matthew, and Luke to John. But if so, then one might suppose that Paul as a witness would be regarded as pre-eminently trustworthy. No book of the New Testament, so far as genuineness is concerned, is less disputed than his principal Epistles. None were written ear-

lier. According to Paul's own statement the leading apostles recognized him as an apostle worthy to preach the same gospel which had been committed to them. They must have admitted the justness of his claim that he had had a special vision of Christ and had received from him direct revelations. What, then, according to all the evidence before us, can be more primitive and trustworthy, as a delineation of the character and work of Christ, than the Epistles of Paul?

Those who assume the Johannean authorship of the Fourth Gospel might give the preference to this, as being the work of an immediate and favorite disciple of the Master. External evidence of its genuineness is indeed practically as decisive as for that of the Pauline Epistles. And though the portraiture of Christ in the Gospel is markedly different in phraseology and mode of conception from that of Paul, yet there is essential harmony. If there is any doctrinal difference, John goes beyond Paul in the exaltation of the Saviour, reaching the point of ascribing to him strict divinity, whereas Paul, though coming near this conception, is less explicit and pronounced in his utterances. So then, assuming the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel, we have in it a biography of Christ written by his favorite disciple, evidently the work of one man, and no compilation, and therefore worthy of peculiar confidence as a portraiture of the Redeemer and his work. Why should the Synoptists be preferred to this, when the question of their origin is still so much a matter of dispute?

But we have still more apostolic testimony. The first Epistle of Peter professes to come from another of the "pillar" apostles. And its representation of

Christ and his work, though having an individuality of its own, is so manifestly in accord with that of Paul's that many critics have been inclined to ascribe it to some disciple of Paul. But here again they have to put mere conjecture against an unbroken line of ancient attestation. We have, then, a Gospel and an Epistle of John (to say nothing of the Apocalypse and the shorter Epistles); we have one, if not two, Epistles from Peter; and all these writings from the most conspicuous of the original apostles, though unlike in style to one another and to the Pauline Epistles, yet agree essentially with them in the exposition which they give of the character of Christ and his relation to the Christian Church.

In view of these facts it is difficult to conceive of anything more uncritical and unreasonable than to assume (1) that only the Gospels can be relied on as giving an authentic account of the life and teachings of Jesus, and then (2) to exclude one of the four Gospels from the list of authentic accounts because it has a different cast from the other three, although it is equally well attested, and finally (3) to expunge as later additions whatever even in the Synoptists more or less accords with the Pauline or Johannean writings in its characterization of Jesus. It is only an extreme form of this procedure, when everything savoring of the supernatural in the Gospels is discredited, and the critic simply accepts as authentic whatever he chooses, following a purely subjective standard.

If there were any insuperable contradiction between the Synoptists on the one hand and the Johannean, Pauline, and Petrine books on the other,

so that it were necessary to make a distinct choice between them, the case would be different; though even then it would be hard to see on what ground the Synoptists should be assumed to be unquestionably more authentic than the other writers. But such a contradiction does not exist. Neither ordinary nor scholarly Christians have found any great difficulty in accepting all of these writings as authentic sources of instruction concerning Christ and Christian truth. They have found in them different, but not discordant, portraits of the one Redeemer in whom they believe. The more various the portraitures the better, so long as the variety furnishes, not confusion, but completeness.

The case, then, stands thus: There are no critical reasons for making the Synoptic Gospels, or an expurgated form of them, the sole authentic documents from which to derive our knowledge of what Christ and pure Christianity are. It would be quite as reasonable, to say the least, to select John or Paul as the authoritative source, and look on the others as only subsidiary, or even as apocryphal. And if we consider the matter from the standpoint of Christian faith, there is still less warrant for confining ourselves to one group of witnesses, to the exclusion of others equally competent and equally trustworthy. From the beginning Christendom has regarded these various delineations of Christian truth as authentic. As a whole, these New Testament writings have been made the standard of right belief and the basis of Christian teaching. The same continuous tradition which has handed down faith in Christ as the Saviour of men has handed down all these writings as vera-

cious and authoritative expositions of the faith once delivered to the saints.

Here, however, it may be said: True, the faith of Christendom has generally been that all these New Testament books are authentic; but the question now is, whether *faith in Christ* requires one to esteem all these books equally. May not one be a genuine Christian, and yet make such discriminations as those above spoken of? If, for example, one accepts only Mark's Gospel as an authentic history of Christ, and regards all the rest of the New Testament as of inferior value, or even as largely tainted with superstitious and fanciful matter, may he not still be a sincere believer in the Christ whom he finds in Mark's Gospel?

No doubt, genuine Christian faith may co-exist with very imperfect and even erroneous conceptions of the nature and offices of Christ. Faith is not a mere intellectual conception, but an act of personal trust. Such a trust may be exercised while yet there is much to learn concerning the one trusted in. The best and wisest of Christians are in this sense learners. Not until we attain to the heavenly state can we hope to know as we are known. But this ignorance is a very different thing from that of him who, not from want of capacity or opportunity, but from a wilful refusal to consider all the sources of illumination, fixes himself in a one-sided and erroneous conception of Christ. The critic who selects certain portions of the New Testament as containing the sole authentic description of Jesus Christ thereby proclaims not *how little*, but *how much*, he knows about him. He assumes to know so much more

about him than Christendom in general does, that he is able to decide what parts of the New Testament give us an incorrect and untrustworthy account of him. He can have no adequate reason for rejecting the testimony of the other parts of the New Testament, unless it is because there is an irreconcilable difference between this testimony and that which he accepts. In short, he has an *a priori* conception of what Christ and the primitive Christianity must have been, and adjusts the documentary evidence to this conception. That is, he sets himself in opposition to *that* Christ whom Christendom has always believed in, and whom the New Testament as a whole bears witness to, and preaches another Christ and another Gospel.

It is only by a stretch of charity or of fancy that such a procedure can be called *criticism* at all. The animating and determining impulse in it is a *dogmatic* one. But it calls itself criticism, assumes some of the forms and appearances of a critical process, and may therefore, at least in a loose sense, be called such. But whatever it may be, it is essentially *anti-Christian*. It has, to be sure, a variety of grades, some of which may involve a comparatively slight departure from the ordinary Christian view; but the principle of the criticism — that of letting a preconceived notion of what Christ must have been determine what parts of the New Testament representation of him shall be conceded to be genuine and authentic — this is not Christian. Whether it leads more, or less, far astray, the method of it is perverse. The result of it, when consistently carried out, is to make every man his own judge as to what the

Scriptural testimony concerning Christian truth ought to be, rather than the docile recipient of the truth as it has been communicated to us by the Scriptures themselves.

What has just been said is of course not applicable to the critical doubts which, with greater or less plausibility, have been cherished concerning certain parts of the New Testament. Whether the deuterocanonical books are genuine; whether John vii. 53—viii. 11 or Mark xvi. 9—20 ought to be received as parts of canonical Scripture; whether Rom. xv. and xvi. are genuinely Pauline; whether Matthew's account of the birth and childhood of Jesus can be harmonized with Luke's; these and such like questions may be raised and answered affirmatively or negatively, without derogating from the sincere Christian faith of those who discuss them, so long as they confine themselves to arguments of a truly critical nature and admit that the New Testament in its entirety must be accepted as giving us an authoritative exposition of the nature, character, and doctrines of Christ. When MS. authority, or historical testimony, or even internal evidence of a peculiarly cogent kind, can be adduced against the genuineness or authenticity of any book, or section of a book, the criticism should at least be carefully considered, even if it be not convincing.

In point of fact, however, the most serious and daring assaults on the authenticity of the New Testament books have been inspired by a different spirit. The critics have not undertaken to show that those parts of the New Testament which are by strictly critical methods proved to be peculiarly trustworthy represent Christ and Christian truth to have been other than

what the Church has taught; on the contrary, they pronounce certain parts of the New Testament untrustworthy *just because they agree with the ecclesiastical doctrine.* It is assumed, for example, that Jesus could not have been a theanthropic being, miraculously born, miraculously working, miraculously risen from the dead; that he cannot be in any pre-eminent sense a Mediator between God and man, or the Judge of the world; and then, whatever in the New Testament countenances such a view of his nature and offices is for that reason declared to be legendary or visionary, and not historical. This leads to another proposition respecting the relation of Christian faith to criticism, viz. —

3. Faith in Christ is inconsistent with a general doubt or denial of the supernatural in the endowment and the work of Christ. Men may have different modes of explaining the narratives of the miraculous; in some cases they may disagree on the point whether a particular occurrence was miraculous or not. They may go too far in trying to tone down the appearance of a supernatural intervention. But still so long as they accept the general representations of the New Testament concerning a supernatural revelation, they cannot be called recreant to the Christian faith.

Undoubtedly the main point to be here insisted on is that Christ himself was, according to the New Testament, an altogether unique being and endowed with superhuman powers. On this point all the books of the New Testament speak with one voice; and Christendom has always accepted the description as true. It is not merely the stories of miraculous deeds

wrought by Christ that must be taken into account, but his general representations of himself, his assumption of extraordinary authority and of supernatural power. These claims run all through the Gospels and are reflected and acknowledged in the Epistles. A supernatural element is intertwined with the whole New Testament sketch of Christ's life and character. Nothing but a purely arbitrary criticism can eliminate it.

It may be argued, however, that in the case of other histories the presence of stories of supernatural occurrences is regarded as of itself a presumptive evidence of untrustworthiness, and that therefore it is not unreasonable to let the same presumption weigh against the stories of miracles in the New Testament. But be it so that, as a general rule, we discredit the supernatural; Christendom has not discredited it in the New Testament, but rather found it to be an essential and irremovable part of the book. If the supernatural in it is to be discarded, then the whole may as well be discarded; for no one can disentangle the supernatural from the natural and determine what shall be called historical. The personality of Christ especially would become an insoluble enigma, if the New Testament portraiture of him is to be reconstructed according to the critical canon that everything must be adjusted to the theory that the supernatural is never to be admitted. For the supernatural is in the person, and not merely in his doings. If the Christian conception of Christ is to be reconstructed in accordance with a purely naturalistic scheme, then not only the miracles, but all the claims of superhuman dignity and authority which Jesus made, must be set aside. But this would be practi-

cally setting aside the greater part of the New Testament. It would be an attempt to discover and portray a Christ of whom we know nothing. It is easy to affirm that Jesus must have been a mere man, however gifted more than most others, and that he could not have laid claim to such powers and prerogatives as have been accorded to him. But the stubborn fact remains that the earliest known account of him is saturated with just the opposite conception of him, and that this conception has from the first been handed down as the true one. This is the Christian view; it must always remain the Christian view; and any other rests on an interpretation of the New Testament which is neither Christian nor critical.

But, it is often urged, the question of miraculous occurences is a *historical* question, and must therefore be settled by historico-critical investigation, not by religious faith. What shall be said to this? No doubt, if miracles ever occurred, they were historical events, and therefore the question of miracles is a historical one. Yes; and equally true is it that if Jesus Christ ever lived on earth, he was a historic personage, and his life and doings form a part of human history. It is consequently a historical question, whether Jesus ever existed, and whether he ever did and said any of the things that are told about him. But if the question is asked, whether it is consistent with faith in Christ to treat the fact of his existence as doubtful, the answer can only be, No; of course the two things are not consistent with one another. If one chooses to treat the existence and alleged life of Christ as of questionable historic truthfulness, he is at liberty

to do so, *but not as a Christian*; for to a Christian Christ and his work are not matters of doubt, but of faith. In so far as the historic question of Christ's existence and mission comes before the true Christian, it is as a question already settled. And the case is not essentially different, though of course not quite the same, when we consider the question of the New Testament miracles. Genuine faith in Christ cannot but have a determining effect on one's critical judgment concerning them. One who has not that faith might be in a certain sense quite justifiable, if he regarded the miraculous element in the New Testament as something to be disbelieved. To be sure, even such a man, if candid, would find difficulties created by rejecting, as well as by accepting, the authenticity of the book. But a *Christian* can take such a view only by abandoning what has been from the beginning of the Christian era regarded as fundamental. The Christ of Christendom — the Prophet, Priest, and King of the new dispensation, the Son of God, the Effulgence of the Father's glory, the Head of the Church universal — this Christ would disappear, if the incredibility of the supernatural is to be the critical canon by which the Christian Scriptures are to be tested. The Church might well say, with Mary Magdelene, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

More particularly, it must be said that a Christian interpretation of the New Testament cannot fail to find the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ to be a historic fact. Not but that subtle and ingenious efforts may be made to explain away the obvious meaning of the whole of the New Testament on this

point; and not but that such efforts may be made by men sincerely desirous of getting at the truth. But the attempts contradict both the general belief of Christendom and the plain and unanimous teaching of the New Testament itself.

This doctrine of the resurrection of Christ has from the beginning been maintained in the Church against all forms of doubt. It is not until very recently that professed Christians have seriously endeavored to controvert it. Their attempts have not been successful. Still the effort is continued; and when a man of Dr. Martineau's ability and sincerity makes the attempt, it might be expected that in view of the weaknesses of previous attacks on the crowning miracle in the life of Christ he would do his best to make out a somewhat plausible case. But what is his argument?[1]

The underlying thought of his exposition is that the faith in Christ's resurrection properly meant only the belief that the crucified Jesus still lives, not, however, in the underworld, but "in the abodes of the immortals." The narratives of the Gospels are summarily cast aside on account of their alleged late origin and mutual contradictions; and Paul, as being the one early witness, is called upon the stand and made to testify that Jesus was never seen after his death except by an inward vision (Gal. i. 16). The detailed statement of 1 Cor. xv. 3—8 is interpreted in the same way. Since to the Galatians Paul said that God had revealed Christ *in* him, therefore it follows, we are told, that the being seen (or the appearing) told of in 1. Cor. xv. must be

[1] *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 361 sqq.

understood in the same way with reference to the experience not only of Paul himself, but also of Peter, James, the twelve, and the five hundred. "The whole of these facts," Paul "*received*, but from two different sources which he is careful to distinguish; the first half, including the resurrection on the third day, were 'accredited by the Scriptures'; the second half, consisting of the Christophanies, were personal experiences related to him by others or felt in himself." If this means anything, it means that Paul did not hear of Christ's death or of his resurrection through reports from the apostles or other witnesses, but that he learned about these things solely from the Scriptures! It might indeed be that Paul could have inferred from the Scriptures that Christ *was going* to die and rise again; but how could he learn that he *had* died and risen? If Paul had said any such thing, we should have some reason to be startled; but fortunately he said nothing of the sort, but simply that the death and resurrection of Christ, *of which he had heard*, were "according to the Scriptures." By no stretch of respectable exegesis can it be made to appear that, when Paul tells us that he has received that Christ was raised *according to* the Scriptures, he really means that he has received *from* the Scriptures that Christ has been raised.

One naturally wonders how so clear-headed a man as Dr. Martineau could be led to so manifest a distortion of the plain language of the apostle. The reason soon appears. Having made out, in this strange way, that the report about the rising on "the third day" did not come from any eye-witnesses, but was a mere inference from the Old Testament, our author thinks the way clear to assert, with regard to the re-

ported Christophanies, that "no date is given for any of them; nor is any locality assigned; provided *the order* were not disturbed, there is no one of them that might not be on the third day or on the three hundredth, — in Jerusalem, — at Bethany, or on the hills of Galilee." We now see what the inducement was to find in Paul's language an indication of two distinct sources of information: in this way that uncomfortable "third day" is disconnected from the narrative received by Paul from the immediate disciples of Christ, and thus an indefinite space of time is gained during which the so-called appearances of Christ might have taken place.

The appeal to Paul is unhappy in still another respect. The narrative which he gives was occasioned by the doubts which some of the Corinthians had expressed concerning the resurrection in general (xv. 12), and particularly concerning *a bodily* resurrection (xv. 35). It was to meet these doubters that Paul calls attention to the *admitted* fact of Christ's resurrection — a fact which he had always made fundamental in his preaching. Now what satisfaction could it have been to those doubters to be told that Peter and James and a number of others had at some time become convinced that Christ's disembodied spirit was still existent in one part, rather than in another part, of the invisible world?

To make all this exegesis the more amazing, our author tells us that the original apostles after all "declared that they had *seen* the risen Christ; and had they not been able to do so, they could hardly have conveyed to others the profound assurance of his heavenly life which, in their own minds, so largely

depended on the impressions of their personal experience." Indeed; are we, then, to understand that they really *had* seen the risen Christ? And if so, then what becomes of all this labored explaining away of Paul's testimony? If not, is it meant that the apostles deliberately lied, in order to convey to others their profound assurance that Christ was now in heaven? There seems to be no other supposition possible. But if the falsehood was so necessary and so successful in reference to men in general, why should we not suppose that it was told to Paul also? In that case, when he reports the account of the appearances of Christ, he is after all to be taken literally.

It may be imagined, however, that Dr. Martineau only means that the original apostles, as well as Paul, in saying that they had *seen* the risen Christ, simply meant that they had had an inward vision of him such as Paul speaks of to the Galatians. But we are forbidden to resort to this explanation of the apparent charge of falsehood; for our author has previously drawn out with great particularity the process of thought and feeling by which the apostles, after the death of Christ, brought themselves to the conviction that he was not in "the storehouse of souls in the underworld", but in heaven with God and the angels. After the first bitter disappointment, we are told, they began to persuade themselves that "the divinest vision of their life" could not have been an illusion. They concluded that they "had read the Prophets with eyes only half open", and began to find references there to the death and resurrection of the Messiah. They reasoned from Jesus' phrase, "kingdom of heaven", that he must have gone to heaven "to bring it." The ideal

picture, we are further told, "had but wavering outlines and colors that changed with the glow or chill from the breath of circumstances." "Thus far, then, that is, to the belief that Jesus, the crucified, *still lives*, and only waits the Father's time to fulfil the promises, an intelligible process might well bring the disciples; and *this is the faith in his resurrection.*" According to this, therefore, it was a "process" of thought, an inference gradually reached, that led to the belief that Jesus was still living, and in the heavenly world; no startling vision, therefore, — nothing that could have warranted them in saying that they had *seen* Jesus risen from the dead. On this theory, therefore, if, in order to accomplish their end, the apostles did say that they had *seen* the risen Christ, they acted the part of deceivers. Moreover, if anything can be gathered from the New Testament about this matter, it is that the assurance of Christ's resurrection was the starting-point in the apostolic preaching. Not only Peter and the eleven, but Paul, make it a vital doctrine. It was Christ's resurrection by which he was "declared (or determined) to be the Son of God" (Rom. i. 4). Unless Christ had risen, the Christians' faith was vain (1 Cor. xv. 17). Everything goes to show that the greatest stress was laid on the fact that the apostles had actually seen the risen Christ. It is inconceivable that they could have preached that fact with such assurance and boldness, if they had only reasoned themselves into the conviction that so superlatively pious a man as Jesus cannot have gone down to Hades, but must have been distinguished, as Enoch and Moses had been before him, by being received at once into the angelic world.

How could the preaching of this process of reasoning have produced conviction in the minds of enemies or doubters? "What is the use", these might well have said, "of telling us that you feel sure that your Master must have been exempted from the ordinary lot of men? We have no doubt that he still exists; but where is the evidence that he is not with the other dead? Have you *seen* him up there in the upper heavens? Or are we expected to take your guesses and inferences for infallible truth?" In short, the preaching of this *belief* that Jesus had been translated like Enoch and Moses could have availed no more than the setting forth of the rare personal excellences of Jesus on which the belief was founded.

And yet these fancies and ingenious speculations, spun out of the brain of the critic, resting on no external authority, but opposed to all the external authority that exists, the Christian world is asked to take on trust in place of the positive and unanimous statements of the New Testament writers and the general faith of Christendom. Such criticism, if criticism it can be called, bids defiance not only to all the laws of evidence, but to a belief of the Christian Church which always has been, and always must be, held to be central and unconquerable. What is here implied may be generalized and put into the form of a fourth proposition —

4. It is inconsistent with a sound Christian faith to apply purely subjective canons of criticism to the interpretation of the doctrine of the New Testament concerning Christ and Christian truth. By this is meant that in a certain important sense the individual Christian is limited in his critical and exegetical

treatment of the Scriptures by the general consensus of Christians. In a general way this may be said of all interpretations. No one can expound a book independently of the influence of other men. Language itself is not an individual, but a social, possession. Words, in themselves apparently mere meaningless sounds, have a meaning, not according as individuals arbitrarily choose to attach a meaning to them, but according to a common understanding as to their meaning. In undertaking to define the purport of a word or a phrase the interpreter is necessarily bound to understand the language, not as he may happen to wish it to mean, but as it actually does mean to men in general. He is limited and determined by the prevalent conceptions.

The case is similar when the meaning of a book is considered. Though there is here somewhat more room for difference of interpretation, yet in general, since usage has fixed the significance of the several words, the combination of words into sentences and of sentences into paragraphs and whole treatises must convey to all who understand the language essentially the same meaning. If there are obscurities, the consensus of those supposed to be best able to investigate them is naturally taken as furnishing the best solution. If the book is written in an ancient and now unspoken language, the rule still holds, that the interpretation which the experts generally adopt is presumably correct.

As to the New Testament in particular, the same principle holds good, with the modification, that in this case the experts should be Christians. In the reaction against the extreme position of the Roman

Catholic Church, which practically shut the Bible away from the common people, and reserved the interpretation of it to a select class, there is danger of forgetting the truth which is involved in the ground assumed by that hierarchy, viz., that deference is due to that interpretation of the Scriptures which has currently prevailed among enlightened, pious, and scholarly Christians. Protestants repudiate, and in most cases, it may be, rightly, certain Roman Catholic expositions of the Bible which seem to be perversions of its obvious meaning. The right of private interpretation must be strenuously maintained. Yet how few, when they try to make a careful study of a Biblical book, are willing to dispense with all commentaries. It savors even of spiritual arrogance when a man professes to receive his exposition of the Scriptures directly from the Holy Spirit, apart from all human instruction. Their exact and full meaning does not always lie on the surface. Often nothing but the lessons of Christian experience suffice to unfold the deeper significance of a passage. But it cannot be the experience of one individual alone which determines that significance. It must be an experience which belongs to the more earnest Christian life in general.

Undoubtedly in a certain sense new light may break out of the Word of God. A better understanding of its meaning may be attained than has been the case before. Progress in archaeological, historical, and linguistic knowledge may make clear what has heretofore been obscure or misunderstood. Or a varied type of Christian character may be developed which brings into greater prominence some previously overlooked or misconceived phases of Biblical doctrine. As in the

starry heavens, notwithstanding all that has been made most certain by scientific research, there is ever room for new explorations, so in the Bible. But whatever new truth concerning it may be attained must be such as commends itself to the generality of Christians, when once it is set forth. If not, that fact itself is sufficient to discredit the alleged discovery. What the Bible really means it must mean to all, not to one or a few only. Allegorical and far-fetched interpretations which individual ingenuity may propound condemn themselves by the very fact that they are far-fetched and do not commend themselves to the plain common sense of Christians in general. What may seem an absolutely new interpretation may be old enough; but if it is new, it cannot be called true, until it proves its worth by being generally accepted. In the long run the ultimate test of a correct exegesis is the consensus of the Christian world.

But with regard to the greater part of the New Testament such a consensus exists already. In spite of many points on which there is disagreement — points of doctrine, ethics, ecclesiastical polity — the general purport of the book is one on which Christendom is agreed. And when a man undertakes to contradict such a general judgment, he is presumptively in the wrong. If, for example, one endeavors to make out that Jesus claimed no peculiar authority and no unique relation to the Father; or that he did not know at the beginning of his ministry that he was the Messiah, and only by degrees came to the suspicion that he might be such; or that he disclaimed having miraculous power; or that John does not teach the preëxistence of Christ; or that

Paul does not teach the doctrine of Christ's vicarious sufferings; and especially if, in propounding such views, a man finds it necessary to pronounce certain passages spurious or unhistorical because they contradict the view propounded; — all such exegesis, doing violence not only to the natural meaning and to the integrity of the text, but to the general judgment of Christendom, must be pronounced opposed to the Christian faith. It is a substitution of an individual judgment as to what ought to have been for the judgment as to what really is. Whether it proceeds from a morbid desire to gain a reputation for originality, or is the sincere conviction of the man who indulges in it, such exegesis cannot command the general assent of Christians. It may be indulged in by good Christians, but it is not Christian exegesis. Men of such erratic propensities are to the Christian world what comets are to the solar system. They may submit to the attraction of the sun and planets; but their orbits are anomalous; and in the end they either are overpowered by the stronger force of the more solid bodies and become absorbed in them, or else they wander off to other systems and are seen no more.

5. Once more, it is in conflict with a normal Christian faith to regard a large part of the New Testament as spurious, fictitious, pseudonymous, or partisan.[1] But here a careful distinction must be

[1] By "partisan" writings I mean what in German are called *Tendenzschriften* — a phrase often either transferred into English works (and then needing a definition) or else rendered "tendency-writings". In the latter case, since the phrase conveys no meaning to one unacquainted with German, "tendency" is

made. One cannot affirm with absolute assurance that our New Testament is entirely free from elements of this sort. We do not have the original manuscripts. We cannot assume an infallible inspiration on the part of the Christians who decided to admit certain books and no others into the list of authoritative Christian Scriptures. We know that diversity of opinion for a long time prevailed respecting some of those writings. Nothing but a preponderance of opinion finally led to the retention, for example, of Second Peter, and to the exclusion of the Epistle of Barnabas. It is certain also that the early Christians were much given to the composition of pseudonymous works, and that many productions of that period are of a mixed character, the original work being enlarged or interpolated by later writers. How, it may be asked, do we know that the books of the New Testament may not be largely works of this sort? How can we be sure that no books of a partisan character gained admission, or that none were smuggled in under false pretenses? Is it not even possible to suppose, with Professor Steck,[1] that *all* the New Testament books are pseudonymous, spurious, and more or less unauthentic, and still manage to select

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sometimes provided with quotation marks, or is printed in Italics — neither of which devices serves any purpose except to suggest that there is some mystery about the word. The term above used, though not a precise equivalent of *Tendenzschrift*, is very near being one, and has the merit of being English. It means substantially what the German word means — a work written in a partisan spirit and distorting, inventing, or misrepresenting facts for a partisan end.

[1] *Der Galaterbrief*, p. 385.

and adopt from this miscellaneous collection enough of truth to warrant us in calling ourselves Christians?

Now to such questions a general answer is that we are entirely dependent on the early church, not only for the preservation of the New Testament Scriptures, but for our historical information as to their authorship. Apart from this traditional information about the New Testament no man would be able to determine anything concerning either its origin or its authenticity. With regard to any written work credible contemporaneous testimony concerning its authorship and composition is of more worth than a hundred critical dissertations which ignore the historical testimony. Without such traditional information, we should not have even the means of detecting the forgeries or interpolations which critical examination may seem to have discovered. Now the books of the New Testament have been delivered to us, we may at least say, with the general endorsement of the early Christian Church as being veracious records of the history and doctrines of Christ and of the establishment of his Church. It is absolutely certain that, whether or not the early Christians were mistaken in their opinion, this was their opinion. We know, moreover, that the Christians of that time were not without critical discernment, and that they distinguished genuine from spurious works. We know that they doubted and differed concerning this or that writing called apostolic. We know that they did not consciously admit pseudonymous or unhistorical works into the Canon. If an Epistle purported to be by Paul, it was not received unless believed to be really by Paul. There were numerous Lives of Christ pub-

lished; but only four were received as authentic. If our New Testament is made up to any considerable extent of spurious or fictitious works, then the Christian Church as a whole either was deceived or was a wilful deceiver.

Now the theory of a wholesale deception practised on posterity by the early Church, even if it could be held by any one, cannot be held by a sincere Christian. It cannot be held consistently with faith in Christ as a teacher of religion and morals; for it presupposes that his earliest followers were made knaves and cheats rather than the truth-loving saints which the New Testament itself enjoins men to be. Such an effect of Christianity on Christian believers, if conceivable at all, would certainly serve to cast discredit on the Founder, as well as on the adherents, of it. That a sincere Christian should really believe this to be the fact is simply impossible.

But may not the Church have been deceived? Amongst the numerous pseudonymous and fictitious productions of that period may not many have imposed on even the most intelligent men and have been accepted as genuine and veracious documents? The question now before us, however, it should be remembered, is whether it may be supposed that in the case of the New Testament a wholesale deception was practised on the Church, so that the entire book was tainted by it, all the books, or the greater part of them, being either untrustworthy in their professed statement of facts, or false in their professed origin.

Now as to this it must be said that, if the earliest records of Christianity, sanctioned by the early Church as an authentic and authoritative exposition of the

facts and truths of the gospel, are so fallacious that they cannot be depended on as giving us in general a truthful statement of what Christ did and said, then it is quite impossible to determine whether any part, or what part, of the New Testament is truthful or genuine; we have no standard by which the writings can be tested; we are left afloat on a boundless sea of conjecture. Christian faith, under such conditions, becomes an indefinable, capricious, shifting thing, and Christ himself becomes lost in a cloud of legends and fictions. Faith in him as an infallible Teacher and as a perfect Redeemer becomes impossible, if not even meaningless.

The question, however, may assume this form: Granted that *in general* the New Testament can be trusted as giving us a correct account of the origin of Christianity, yet may not in some instances unhistorical narratives or spurious treatises have succeeded in getting accepted as apostolic, or at least as authentic, productions? The *possibility* of this must be conceded. Unless we hold (what we have no proof of) that the Church was infallibly guarded from all error and deception, it is conceivable that it may have been, in some few and subordinate instances, misled by a plausible fiction or forgery. But if so, the deception could have been successful only because the fraudulent work, instead of contradicting accepted facts and doctrines, was in harmony with them. If, however, the early Christians found no such incompatibility between the contents of the doubtful books and the others as to awaken suspicions of fraud, they could have been kept from being deceïved only by some external evidence concerning the authorship

of the books in question. As the fact shows, they found no such external evidence as to warrant them in rejecting the books. And if *they* found none, at a time when it might have been accessible, still less can any be found now, unless (what is as good as impossible) some authentic document of that age, hitherto unknown, should be discovered which would demonstratively prove that the framers of the Canon had been successfully deceived.

There remains, then, for the modern critic who would discredit any of the New Testament books no evidence but internal evidence, and no more of that than was equally patent to the scholars of the early Church. The argument can be only such as can be made out by comparing the suspected parts with the others in regard to their language and contents. But inasmuch as no fresh external evidence is to be had, and the style and contents, not having been found to furnish decisive evidence of spuriousness or untrustworthiness to the early Christians, can hardly furnish such evidence to the later Christians, it is not too much to say that *no case of a fraudulent or fictitious work being smuggled into the Canon can ever be proved.* At the most the hypothesis of fraud can only in individual instances be made somewhat plausible; it can never be made certain. In the case of the deuterocanonical books, respecting which we know that doubts, more or less serious, were rife in the early Church, one may be justified in thinking that perhaps or even probably the ultimate decision was unwarranted by the facts. These books accordingly have generally not had the weight of full canonical authority. But the presumption still remains that, even

with regard to them, the original decision was correct; and the opposite can never conclusively be made out.

With reference, however, to books which were originally unchallenged, and which through all the Christian centuries up to the present have been regarded as being what they profess to be, the case is different. In so far as the effort is made to discredit the New Testament as a whole, I need not repeat what has been already observed. But it is often argued that certain books, as, for example, the Fourth Gospel, or the Epistle to the Ephesians, may be regarded as spurious without impairing the general authenticity of the New Testament. Indeed, so far as the latter book and other of the Pauline Epistles are concerned, it is sometimes said that they are equally edifying whether written by Paul or some one else who assumed his name [1]. They are at any rate,

[1] So, e. g., R. F. Horton, *Inspiration and the Bible*, p. 31, where he says, "Those who have drunk most deeply of the spirit of those wonderful letters would never dream of saying that their value depended on the question whether St. Paul wrote them or not." Yet singularly enough, he goes on to take up the Epistle to the Galatians, and finds a large part of the interest and value of the Epistle to consist in the fact that Paul *did* write it! But surely, if of Ephesians, then also of Galatians and Corinthians, the value does not depend on their Pauline authorship. But in that case what shall be said of all the *personal testimony* in the Epistles? What real value can be attached to the passage about Christ's resurrection in 1 Cor. xv., if it is immaterial whether Paul wrote it, or some unknown man writing, no one knows when, what for unknown reasons he chose to put into Paul's mouth concerning the resurrection of Christ? Or when we read what is said of Christ in Phil. ii. 5–11 or Col. i. 14—20, is it immaterial when and by whom such statements were made? If Paul made them —

we are told, Pauline in tone and spirit; and if written by some one who was too modest to give his own name, and who did not have the sensitive conscience of modern times as regards literary honesty, what harm, it is asked, is there in supposing that the letters are pseudonymous? To all which it need only be said: If the letters are so Pauline that they *might* have been written by Paul, if they *profess* to have been written by Paul, and were from the first *thought* to have been written by Paul, then why, in the name of common sense, should we not believe that they

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Paul who professed to have received revelations from Christ himself, Paul who had early conferences with the original apostles and declared himself to be a preacher of the same gospel as they preached — if Paul made them, they have assuredly more weight than if made by some unknown man of some unknown later time. There is undoubtedly some force in the allegation that the value of a Biblical utterance does not depend on our knowledge of its author. An anonymous Psalm, for instance, may be just as edifying as if a name were prefixed to it. But the allegation cannot be made of universal application. It is opposed to what the higher critics themselves often aud properly claim for their science, viz. that it invests the Bible with fresh interest just because it brings before us the circumstances under which, or the times during which, the books were written; because it undertakes to make real the men who wrote them and the people for whom they were written. If there is anything in all this, then surely the same men cannot at the same time affirm that it makes no difference when or by whom a book of the Bible was written. If the result of Biblical criticism should be to prove that we know nothing about the age, authorship, or authenticity of any one of the books of the New Testament, it would be necessary of course to submit to the decision; but it would be only an insult to one's common sense to accompany the verdict with the unctuous remark that after all the Scriptures are just as edifying, whether we can have any assurance that the writings are genuine and trustworthy or not.

were written by Paul? Does Biblical criticism consist in setting up hypotheses that have no solid foundation and defending them by the inane argument, that we should be just as well off as now, even if they did have a foundation?

It may be alleged, however, that there *is* a foundation for the doubt concerning some of the so-called Pauline Epistles. Although similar in style and doctrine to the admittedly genuine ones, yet, it is argued, they are so far different that a critical examination shows them to have been written by other men under Paul's name. As to this, it can only be said that the question, whether the internal evidence against the genuineness of the Epistles is conclusive, is one to be passed on by scholarly and thoughtful Christians in general. And in point of fact the evidence has by no means convinced the most of those best qualified to judge. As to the matter of style, there is just such a mingling of similarity and variety, when we compare the disputed with the undisputed Epistles, as might be looked for in letters written at different times and under different circumstances. As to doctrine and contents, the most that can be made out is that the smaller Epistles to some extent treat of different topics from those of the larger ones, that they come somewhat nearer to a deification of Christ, and that they do not deal in a polemic against the Judaizers. But as to the latter point, neither do the Corinthian letters treat of it. As to the second, no Epistle goes farther than that to the Philippians (ii. 5—7), of which now few even of Baur's disciples dispute the genuineness. And as to the first, it is a singular requirement that the apostle, in writing to

different churches, must always have handled precisely the same themes.

But it is not here in place to discuss in detail the merits of the particular assaults that have been made on the genuineness of the Pauline Epistles.[1] It is

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[1] So far as these assaults have come from the Tübingen school, the force of them is neutralized as soon as the fundamental assumption relative to a radical difference between Paul and the other apostles is overthrown. And that it is without foundation is clear to any impartial man from the very Epistle from which the main proof of the difference between Paul and the Petrine party is sought to be found. Paul here (Gal. i. 18, ii. 6—9) himself distinctly testifies that he and the leading apostles were in substantial harmony before he wrote this Epistle. The narrative in Acts xv. perfectly accords with this representation. That there was a Judaizing party among the Christians is clear enough; but that any of the apostles headed or favored this party, we have no proof whatever. Paul's designation of certain men as those who came from James (Gal. ii. 12), when taken in connection with ii. 9, where James is stated to have given him the right hand after the apostolic conference had decided the disputed questions, cannot fairly be made to mean more than that they came from the church of which James was the pastor (cf. Lightfoot on *Galatians*, the dissertation on *St. Paul and the Three,* p. 344, who pertinently refers to Acts xv. 24 as a parallel). But in any case James, according to both Luke and Paul, had expressly sanctioned the exempting of the Gentile Christians from circumcision and the observance of the Mosaic law, which is the subject with which Paul is dealing in his letter to the Galatians. In fact, so groundless is this whole theory of a bitter contention between Paul and the other apostles that Steck, a disciple of Baur, but one who carries his skepticism out to the extreme, admits that there is no evidence that there was any radical difference between Paul and the other apostles, but argues that later the contention between the Judaizers and the anti-Judaizers became bitter, and gave rise to the forging of the Epistle to the Gala-

safe to say that in general they have been successfully refuted, and that at the most, even as respects the Pastoral Epistles, the doubt can only be made plausible, while external evidence against them is wholly wanting. But the question now is, whether it is consistent with faith in Christ to suppose that in a few instances Epistles falsely pretending to be written by Paul may have been admitted into the Canon. If to any one the evidence for such a judgment seems to be convincing, may he not adopt and avow it without being denounced as recreant to the Christian faith? This question must be answered in the affirmative. However perverse the judgment may appear to others, and however improbable it may be that such an opinion will ever become that of Christendom in general, still, since the early Church itself wavered respecting some books, and since it was not supernaturally kept from making mistakes, it does not seem to be impossible that in the cases supposed a mistake was also made. Provided the New Testament in general is received as conveying to us a correct account of Christ and his claims, and provided he is accepted as Lord and Saviour, the critical opinions in question do not contravene what is essential to Christian faith.

The case is similar, but not quite the same, as regards the Fourth Gospel. It does not so unmistakably profess to be written by John as the Pauline Epistles profess to be by Paul; and therefore there

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tians (*Der Galaterbrief*, p. 371 sqq.). It is strange, however, on this hypothesis that the forger did not make out a more unequivocal case.

may seem to be more liberty to doubt its Johannean origin than the Pauline origin of the Epistles. On the other hand, however, the book really, though not explicitly, ascribes itself to John; and the importance of the Gospel, as standing in a certain sense by itself over against the three others, gives it a much greater relative importance than even a considerable number of the Pauline Epistles. We should have Paul's Christology, even though a number of the ostensibly Pauline Epistles were regarded as spurious. But if John did not write the Fourth Gospel, if it was a fictitious production of the middle of the second century, not to be relied on wherever it is not confirmed by the Synoptic Gospels, then a very important part of the Evangelistic portraiture of Jesus is removed. We have no substitute for it in any other confessedly Johannean production (for John's First Epistle, as is generally admitted, must stand or fall with the Gospel). If, however, the Gospel is supposed to have been written by some disciple of John early in the second century, and to embody substantially what John had orally taught or had left in written memoranda concerning the life and words of Jesus, then, even though the evidence for such a hypothesis may be altogether insufficient to establish it, still the practical result is not very materially different from that of ascribing the Gospel to John himself.

In general it may be said that the relation of critical doubt to Christian faith depends mainly on the animus that lies at the basis of it. If the disposition is to make Christian doctrine materially different from what Christendom in general, following the New Testament as a whole, has pronounced it to be; if, especially,

in doing so, the critic eliminates the supernatural from the Gospels and pronounces the Johannean and Pauline writings spurious, or at least untrue to the religion of Christ himself; if in general the critic appears to be disposed to make his own likes and dislikes, rather than historical testimony and the general belief of Christendom, the standard according to which he accepts or rejects books or sections of books of the New Testament; — then whatever, in the judgment of charity, may be thought of the critic's heart, it is not uncharitable to say that his critical processes are essentially unchristian. If purely subjective standards of judgment may decide in one case what shall be regarded as the truth, then equally in every other. Every man thus becomes a law to himself, and there is no common bond that unites all Christians together. The notion, not infrequently ventilated, that only that is true Scripture which "finds" a man, that is, which makes on him the impression of being inspired or divine, is radically vicious. Even though every one might be "found" by certain portions of the Bible, neither any one individual, nor all the individuals put together, would by that method alone ever be able to "find" the Scriptures.

What, then, it may be asked, are the prerogatives and uses of Biblical criticism as regards the New Testament? In general, it is useful in whatever way it can throw light on the origin, object, and mutual relations of the New Testament books. Whatever well-established facts can be made to illustrate any of the topics and problems suggested by these books should be cordially welcomed. Information gathered from linguistic, archaeological, or historical sources,

which serves to elucidate the meaning, or present more clearly the setting, of the several books can never come amiss. In short, there should be every encouragement given to the critic to find out all the *facts* which are attainable respecting the subject of his inquiry. In the long run nothing but good can result from the discovery of truth.

As to the particular problems with which New Testament criticism has to do, they have, it is true, so long been the subject of discussion and research that nothing very startlingly novel can be looked for either in method or result. Yet new light is continually being turned on old truths; new objections are raised, and new forms of defense are resorted to; or the older form of doctrine may, under the influence of a more searching induction of facts, give place to another form without a surrender of the substance. And all such tilling of the old fields yields its fruit in a more intelligent and comprehensive view of Biblical truth.

Even when opinions widely diverge from one another, earnest and patient discussion and examination may be expected to result in some advance in Biblical science. The Synoptic problem, for example, seems to be insoluble. It looks as if no one theory of the origin of the first three Gospels would ever be able to drive every other from the ground; and much toilsome labor may appear to yield very little fruit. But anything that compels close attention to the details of the sacred record is a good thing. Even if not the result aimed at, yet some useful result, will be attained. Already it has become tolerably clear to the ordinary Christian that the resemblances and

differences of these Gospels are so peculiar as to neccessitate the abandonment of the notion that they were each written in perfect independence of other records of Christ's life and discourses. Whether we shall ever be able to penetrate the exact process is, to be sure, problematic; but it is not unlikely that one result will be to make nearly or quite certain that historical records of the doings and sayings of Christ were in existence soon after his resurrection, so that our present Gospels shall prove to be not merely narratives dating from somewhere near 60 or 70 A.D., but narratives which embody in themselves still earlier records. But even though no such result should become assured, yet the study of the problem must bring incidental good in the attention which it directs to the minutiae, as well as to the general drift, of the Gospel narratives.

This same minute comparison of the Gospels with one another serves, it is true, to call attention to the differences and discrepancies between them. Yet this too, if done in the spirit of honest inquiry, must result in good. If the conclusion should be that there are differences in the description of the same event, or in the report of the same discourse, which cannot be reconciled so as to avoid the assumption of incidental inaccuracy, no one should be alarmed by the fact. These variations, as has often been insisted on, furnish a proof of the absence of collusion, so that we may reverently believe that God himself deemed it expedient for the security of his own revelation that the Evangelists, while doing their best to report faithfully what they had seen and heard, should yet not be lifted wholly above the infirmities

to which other historians are subject. The general harmony of impression in the account of Jesus' Messianic work is such that no unprejudiced man could find in the slight discrepancies any reason for a general distrust of the truthfulness of the record.

The same considerations apply to the comparison of Acts with the Pauline Epistles or of these with one another. It is no new field of labor; but there is still room for further research. And there remain still the old problems concerning the Aramaic original of the First Gospel, the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and other like questions. The problems concerning the Fourth Gospel and the Pastoral Epistles, and concerning the Apocalypse in itself and in its relation to the Fourth Gospel, will also probably for some time continue to engage the attention of Biblical scholars. Much that is far-fetched and fanciful is likely to be advanced in the discussion of such themes; but the discussion should be free and full; and in the end what is of real worth in the new contributions will become generally accepted. Of especial value are the investigations in the field of patristic literature such as Zahn, Harnack, Sanday, Lightfoot, and others have undertaken, as also in that of the Jewish literature of the period between Malachi and the birth of Christ. The discovery of manuscripts of lost books, such as the works of Hippolytus, the Diatessaron of Tatian, the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Apology of Aristides, has been of immense importance in its bearing on certain disputed points of New Testament criticism; and it encourages the hope that still other discoveries may be made. Who can estimate, for example, what light might be

thrown on many problems by the discovery of the lost writings of Papias?

External evidence, such as that just referred to, is of vastly more weight in determining question of date and authorship than arguments drawn merely from a critical examination of the contents of the Biblical books. But criticism of the latter kind, although precarious and often abused, must be defended as legitimate and valuable. In some cases of doubt as to the origin of a book we are nearly or quite shut up to it. And when the question is raised, whether the New Testament is an inspired and infallible book, the answer cannot be derived solely or chiefly from historic testimony. We have, it is true, the traditional doctrine on the subject; but when we inquire on what ground the belief in question rests, no answer can be satisfactory which is not founded largely on an investigation of what the books of the New Testament themselves have to say.

Biblical criticism of the so-called "higher" kind will always have a place in Biblical scholarship. Old problems are always springing up in a new phase, and new ones are raised, all of which must be met and solved, so far as they can be solved, by the higher criticism. Yet after all the principal use and value of the New Testament must always consist in the disclosures it makes of the love of God and of his plan of salvation in Christ. What it communicates may be systematized into dogmatic statements, or brought home to the heart and conscience in homiletic form, or used privately as a means of spiritual enlightenment and edification. The practical, religious use of the Bible is the main use. Biblical

criticism, though often necessarily dry and without any apparent practical use, must ultimately, if true to itself, minister to the end of making the oracles of God more than ever before the source of spiritual light and life.

CHAPTER III.

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

When we come to consider how far Christian faith puts a limit upon critical judgments concerning the Old Testament, it is obvious that the case is considerably different from that of the New Testament. In the latter case we are dealing with a book written after Jesus' earthly life was closed — a book, therefore, of which he said nothing, and whose authority is quite independent of any sanction coming directly from him. We believe the New Testament, not because Jesus endorsed it, but because it is the written embodiment of the same gospel which Jesus came to preach, and which was propagated orally by his disciples. We believe it because we cannot reject it without also rejecting him of whom we have there the only early authentic records.

The Old Testament, on the other hand, as a religious book, claims the respect and confidence of Christians primarily because it gives us a history that is introductory to that of Christ, and because it was recognized by Christ himself as the vehicle of a divine revelation. The New Testament writers in

general, and Christ as reported by them in particular, speak of it with peculiar respect as a storehouse of religious history and instruction. In so far, then, as faith in Christ has specifically anything to do in determining our judgment of the Old Testament, the influence of it comes chiefly from the consideration that what Christ himself held and taught respecting the Old Testament should have a controlling weight with us. In short, while we believe in the New Testament because of what it tells about Christ, we believe in the Old Testament because of what Christ tells about it.

The consideration of the topic here presented naturally divides itself into two parts: (1) What does Christ say about the Old Testament? (2) How far are his utterances to determine our own judgment?

I. In general, as no can doubt, Jesus speaks of the Old Testament with the greatest reverence as being a history and vehicle of a divine revelation. He appeals to it in his controversies with the Jews as an ultimate authority. And no less in his discourses to his disciples does he give it the same dignity.

To the Sadducees, when they questioned him about the application of the levirate law in heaven, he said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matt. xxii. 29, Mark xii. 24), and proceeded to enforce his answer by an appeal to Ex. iii. 6. In his talk with the Jews, as recorded in John v., there is the same appeal to the Scriptures as authoritative: "Ye search the Scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me" (v. 39, 46). He repeatedly speaks of the Scriptures as prophetic and fulfilled (Matt. xxi. 42,

Luke iv. 21), and of the *necessity* of their being fulfilled (Matt. xxvi. 54, Mark xiv. 19, Luke xxiv. 44, John xiii. 18, xvii. 12). He represents the Old Testament in general as being prophetic of him and of his work (Luke xxiv. 27, John v. 39). He speaks of the Scriptures as something that cannot be broken (John x. 35). He says that he is come, not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them, and that not one jot or tittle shall pass away from the law till all of it is fulfilled (Matt. v. 17, 18, Luke xvi. 17). When he is asked concerning the great duty of man, he appeals at once to the law (Luke x. 26).

The language and precepts of the Old Testament are often called by Christ the words of God; e. g., "For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and thy mother" (Matt. xv. 4—6, Mark vii. 8, 13, cf. Matt. xxii. 31, John x. 35). What in Mark vii. 10 is called the commandment of Moses is spoken of in verses 8 and 13 as the commandment (word) of God. And generally, even when there is no such explicit identification, what Moses prescribed is spoken of by our Lord as divinely authoritative (Matt. viii. 4, Mark i. 44, John vii. 19, 23). Similarly Moses and the prophets, (Luke xvi. 29, 31), or the law and the prophets (Matt. vii. 12, xi. 13, Luke xvi. 16). So likewise the prophets in particular (Matt. xxvi. 56, Luke xviii. 31, xxiv. 25, John vi. 45).

Nowhere, moreover, do we find any exception to this reverential treatment of the Old Testament on Christ's part. In two cases he seems indeed to find fault with the law: viz., in Matt. v. 38 sqq., where the law, "An eye for an eye," etc., is followed by

the injunction, "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil"; and in Matt. xix. 8 (Mark x. 5), where the law of Moses concerning divorce is superseded by a stricter one. But in the first case the point of the comment is not that the law, as a rule for magistrates, is to be done away, but that the law of retaliation is not to be made a rule for men in their private relations to one another. And in the second case the original law, though declared to be too lax, is yet, by implication, affirmed to have been divinely sanctioned on account of the hardness of the Jews' hearts.

Now since we know how intense, even to the point of superstition, was the reverence cherished by the Jews of Christ's time for the Old Testament, it is obvious that, if he radically differed from them in regard to it, he could hardly have failed to indicate the difference. But whenever he rebukes them, it is not for overestimating the law, but for perverting, misunderstanding, or disobeying it (e. g. Matt. xxiii. 2—4, 23, John v. 46, vii. 19). This silence of Christ — this tacit endorsement of the current view of the Old Testament — taken in connection with what he positively says about it, is of no little weight.

To this might be added at great length the general manner in which the New Testament writers speak of the Old Testament. Inasmuch as they wrote under the influence of the great Teacher, who had expounded to them the reference of the Old Testament to himself (Luke xxiv. 27), and who had opened their mind that they might understand the Scriptures (xxiv. 45), it would be pertinent to adduce their general estimate of the Old Testament as reflecting the opinion of Christ himself. But this is not necessary. It is

sufficient to say that they fully agree with those utterances of Jesus which are recorded by the Evangelists. Everywhere the Old Testament is spoken of as a book of divine laws and prophecies finding their fulfilment in the new covenant.

It can at any rate not be questioned that Christ represented the Old Testament to be a collection of laws, prophecies, and other writings possessing divine authority and permeated with a prophetic reference to the Messianic dispensation. When his ministry was about to begin, he appealed to the Scripture in his conflict with Satanic temptation; and at the close of his ministry he took pains to enlighten his disciples respecting the meaning of it. He never spoke disparagingly of any part of it, but always left the impression, by what he said and by what he did not say, that he held it to be the word of God — an embodiment, in written form, of the will and wisdom of God as revealed in his conduct of his chosen people.

II. But it is important to consider the question, what weight is to be attached to Christ's utterances respecting the Old Testament. How far do they serve to settle disputed questions for us? Are we to assume that his authority can properly be appealed to at all for the solution of purely critical problems? It might at first blush seem as if what he thought and said, if we can only ascertain what that was, ought to be accepted as the final word on all doubtful and disputed points. But this impression is by many regarded as unwarranted. Christ's authority as a Redeemer and as a revealer of divine truth — his strictly *religious* commission — is distinguished from his authority on matters of science, history, and

criticism. While we may trust him implicitly as our spiritual Head, we need not, it is said, implicitly trust what seemed to be his opinions on matters that did not directly concern his great work.

This introduces us to a difficult theological problem. Was Christ omniscient? Or if not absolutely omniscient, how are we to conceive of the limitations of his knowledge? If the man Jesus was strictly omniscient, then of course, since no one will charge him with wilful misrepresentation, it follows that whatever he said about the Old Testament, as well as everything else, is to be received as absolute truth. If, on the other hand, he was a mere man, subject to the limitations of humanity in general and of his own time in particular, then, however superior in most respects he may have been to the generality of his fellow-men, his opinions on matters beyond the range of his immediate knowledge cannot be regarded as authoritative. If, again, though not omniscient, he yet was so unique in his mental and spiritual endowments that he belongs to a class by himself, then we have to ascertain, as best we can, whether this uniqueness of endowment was such that whatever he said, even on matters not directly pertaining to his mission, must be received as strictly infallible.

1. In prosecuting this inquiry it is proper first to consider what the general opinion of Christendom has been upon the matter. And the answer is naturally to be sought in the creeds of the Church, the ecumenical and such others as have voiced the judgment of large portions of the Church. These creeds, it is true, cannot be adduced as infallible. Being themselves professedly systematic statements of Scrip-

tural truth, they must be tested by Scripture. But as embodying the interpretation which representative bodies of the Church have put on Biblical doctrine, they are certainly deserving of very great respect.

The early Councils, in formulating the doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation, confined themselves mostly to general statements aiming to define the mode of the union of three Persons in one, and of two Natures in one Person. And the general burden of their deliverances was that there is one God consisting of three Persons of one substance and equal to one another in glory. As regards the Incarnation, they teach that the Logos, or eternal Son, in becoming man, assumed human nature, and so united in himself a divine and human nature, but had a single personality. The Nicene Creed puts this in a very general form; that of Chalcedon is more specific, being the first to speak of the union of two natures in the incarnate Son, but not yet formulating the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity; while the Athanasian enunciates both with great minuteness and precision. But even in the Nicene the doctrine is propounded, that "the only begotten Son of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man." The following creeds only state this doctrine more minutely in opposition to heretics; but the substance remains the same: Jesus Christ is conceived to be God and Man in one Person. And all the subsequent historic creeds, both Greek, Roman Catholic, and Protestant, have echoed the same doctrine.

The natural inference would seem to be that, if God was made man, and especially if in the union of

God and man the Logos is regarded as the principle of the new personality, then the God-man must have had the mental characteristics of God rather than of man, and that accordingly Jesus must have been strictly omniscient. In point of fact, however, the actual interpretation of the doctrine in question has generally been different. Although the oneness of the personality has been insisted on, it has been common so to conceive of the God-man that, on account of the duality of the nature, there was a duality of mental characteristics. Accordingly it is said that as to his divine nature he was omniscient, but that as to his human nature he was limited in his knowledge.[1] So also the creeds have ascribed to Christ a double will, condemning monotheletism as a heresy.

[1] See, e. g., Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. ii., p. 387 sqq. The *Formula of Concord* stands almost or quite alone, among the conspicuous Creeds of the Church, in affirming omniscience of the human nature of Christ. In Art. VIII among the *errors* condemned is (No. XV) "that, according to the humanity, he [the Son of God] is not at all capable of omnipotence and other properties of the divine nature". And more specifically as to omniscience it is condemned as an error (No. XVII) to hold "that to Christ, according to his human spirit, certain limits are appointed as to how much it behooves him to know". In the positive Christological statements of the same Article (Sect. XI) it is said, "Therefore now [i. e. as glorified] not only as God, but also as man, he knows all things, can do all things", etc. In his earthly life, the same Section teaches, Christ divested himself of the divine majesty, and "did not always make use of that majesty, but as often as seemed good to him". — In Sect. III, however, it is expressly said of the distinctively divine attributes of omnipotence, eternity, omniscience, etc., "All these things neither are nor ever become the attributes of the human nature". It is not easy to see how this latter affirmation can be reconciled with the others.

The obvious difficulty with this mode of conception is that cognition and volition seem to be *personal* characteristics, so that to say that a person has two distinct wills and two sets of cognitions is equivalent to saying that the personality is a double one. And accordingly there has been a wide-spread tendency in recent times to modify the doctrine of the God-man so as to ascribe to him a single personality in a less ambiguous way. This is done by assuming that the deity in the God-man was, as it were, only germinally present at first and was gradually imparted, becoming complete only in the glorified Redeemer; so that the historical Jesus, although unique, was yet subject, in all the development of his personal traits, to limitations which which were overcome only by degrees. This theory avoids the difficulty involved in the other — the apparent self-contradiction of assuming two sets of personal attributes in a single person; but it has some difficulties of its own, especially if the intention is to remain true to the old doctrine of two natures in one person. The divine nature seems to be so thoroughly emptied of divine characteristics that it becomes questionable whether the incarnate Logos can properly be called divine at all. And the conception of a person, at first apparently only human, gradually *becoming* divine, is not altogether consistent with the ordinary notion of a radical distinction between deity and humanity.

But whether standing on one confessional basis or another, theologians have not generally ascribed to the man Christ Jesus, as he was in his earthly life, strict omniscience. Whether they have thought of him as having voluntarily divested himself of his

strictly divine attributes, or as otherwise limited, — in either case they have assumed some limitations of his divine attributes, and among them of his omniscience. At the same time in one form or another they have assumed that in knowledge and power, as well as in his moral character, Christ was altogether unique among men.

But it is not in place here to criticise the creeds, or to construct a dogmatic statement concerning the peculiar nature of Jesus Christ. It is not necessary to assume that the creeds are legitimately deduced from the Scriptures. We assume simply that the New Testament gives us a truthful account of the facts concerning Christ. If the creeds seem to state the doctrine of the New Testament imperfectly, one-sidedly, or erroneously, no one can be required to abjure his own judgment and accept a statement which seems to him untrue to the Biblical teaching. No one can properly be required to adopt any particular dogmatic view of the incarnation or deity of Christ, unless the New Testament itself seems to affirm it. We have only to consider the person Jesus as he is portrayed to us in the Biblical records, and to decide whether according to that portraiture he was omniscient, or, if not, to what extent his knowledge is to be assumed to have been limited.

2. What, then, does the New Testament teach us on this point? If we first raise the question, whether Christ is there represented as absolutely omniscient, we can apparently without much difficulty find a negative answer. There are particularly two statements, one positive and the other negative, which seem to settle the question. In Luke ii. 52 it is said that

"Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men". This certainly seems to be a plain affirmation that Jesus' wisdom (and of course his knowledge) was susceptible of growth, and leaves the impression that in this respect he was like other human beings. This certainly holds true, according to this passage, of the early part of his life. It may be held that the period of limitation terminated at his baptism, or at any rate at his ascension. But against the first of these possible hypotheses stands the other explicit statement, Mark xiii. 32 (to which now perhaps is to be added, according to the critical text, Matt. xxiv. 36), in which Jesus himself declares that "of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father". This is unequivocal, and cannot fairly be understood otherwise than according to the obvious meaning. Such an explanation as that given by some of the older theologians, for example, Jerome, that the passage imputes ignorance to the Church rather than to its Head, is so violent that it only shows the difficulty of any other interpretation of the passage than that which lies on the face of it. Scarcely less forced is Augustine's explanation (followed by many), that Christ did not know so as to make known to others. This makes little less than a direct falsehood of Christ's affirmation, and one the motive for which is difficult to imagine. The declaration was not made in answer to a question, so that there is no pretext for supposing that Christ is here repelling an undue curiosity. And when after his resurrection he was questioned by his disciples on the same point, he met the question by an answer which shows that he

could deal with curiosity otherwise than by cowardly deception: "It is not for you to know times or seasons"; and when he adds, "which the Father hath set within his own authority", he here again, though somewhat less explicitly, intimates that the time of his coming into his kingdom is known only to the Father.

What is directly affirmed in these passages is more or less distinctly implied in many others. When it is said (Heb. v. 8) that Jesus "learned obedience by the things which he suffered", and when (Heb. ii. 10) he is said to have been "made perfect through sufferings", it is certainly affirmed of him that he was subject to growth. Reference is indeed not made specifically to the mere acquisition of knowledge in the ordinary sense; but learning obedience and becoming perfect through suffering cannot naturally be conceived as co-existing with a knowledge which was absolutely unlimited from the beginning. It gives, moreover, an unnaturalness and insincerity to many things in the life of Christ, if such an absolute omniscience is assumed. If he was thus all-knowing, how could he "marvel" at the centurion's faith (Matt. viii. 10) or at the Galileans' unbelief (Mark vi. 6)? How could he have prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me"? Why should it be said of him that he withdrew into Galilee "when he *heard* that John was delivered up" (Matt. iv. 12), if he knew it without being informed?

And yet when one is disposed to draw a sweeping inference from such things and to conclude that Jesus was essentially like other men in the matter of knowledge, he is at once confronted by another class

of facts that point to an altogether unique intelligence. At the very beginning of his ministry we read that he had a supernatural knowledge concerning Nathanael and his character (John i. 47, 48). Repeatedly he is said to have known the thoughts of those who were about him (Matt. ix. 4, xii. 25, Luke vi. 8, xi. 17, John vi. 61, 64, xiii. 11); he is said to have known all the things that were coming upon him (John xviii. 4). Such was the impression which he made on his disciples that John makes the general statement, "He knew all men, and needed not that any should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man" (ii. 24, 25). And Peter, after Christ's resurrection, said to him, "Thou knowest all things" (John xxi. 17). When he was told of Lazarus's sickness, he remained two days where he was, and then announced Lazarus's death, although not told of it. He uttered formal predictions of what was to take place in the future, — the destruction of Jerusalem, Judas's treason, Peter's denial, his own approaching death and the manner of it.

And even the very passage which most unmistakably affirms the limitation of his knowledge affirms by implication that he possessed knowledge in an altogether unique degree. In saying that "of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son", Christ indirectly affirms that it might naturally have been expected that he would know not only what other men do not know, but what even the angels in heaven do not know. The very affirmation of ignorance strikes the reader as something surprising. The declaration occurs, moreover, in the midst of a discourse which deals

with future events that no one but Christ would have ventured to pretend to be able to foretell. Although he is described as learning and asking questions, yet he always makes the impression of being fully informed with reference to whatever he spoke about; and he spoke with an authority and power which overawed even his enemies. He claimed an intimacy with God which seems to guarantee a fulness of knowledge entirely unparalleled: "I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father" (John x. 14, 15). "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). "If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also" (John viii. 19). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (xiv. 9).

But apart from particular utterances from Jesus himself or from others concerning the extent of his knowledge, one cannot but draw an inference from the general characterization which the New Testament gives of him. He calls himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John xiv. 6). He announced that he would draw all men unto himself (xii. 32). He professes to have come on earth to redeem men from sin and death (Luke xix. 10, John xi. 25), and calls himself the Light of the world (John viii. 12). He assumes the prerogative of universal judge (Matt. xxv. 31—46). And what he himself claims his followers all accord to him. He is to them all in all (Col. iii. 11), the Son of God through whom all things were made (John i. 3, 10, Col. i. 16, Heb. i. 2). He is called the power

and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. i. 24), the one who was made unto men wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (i. 30). He is called the High Priest who is able to succor all that are tempted (Heb. ii. 17, 18). He is called the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. xvii. 14, xix. 16), the Head of an everlasting kingdom (Luke i. 33, 2 Pet. i. 11). He is described as a divine being who came down from heaven to earth and has now returned to the glory which he had before (John i. 1—14, xvii. 5, Phil. ii. 5—11, Heb. i. 3).

Now it is impossible not to suppose that a being so uniquely endowed and invested with such exalted prerogatives was gifted with altogether unique knowledge. He who is to be the King and Judge of all men surely cannot exercise his office without something approximating to omniscience; and we cannot therefore be surprised when Paul speaks of Christ as the one in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (Col. ii. 3). And even if it be supposed that Jesus is now, in his exalted state, possessed of a degree of knowledge which he did not have in his earthly life, still the representations which he made of himself and which others made of him concerning his earthly life necessitate the assumption of a knowledge as unique as the functions which he had to exercise. It is, therefore, not strange that theologians have often spoken of him as if he were omniscient in the strictest sense. It is true that the hypothesis of a double cognitive faculty, such that Jesus can be said to have been omniscient as to his divine nature, but not omniscient as to his human nature, aside from its seeming incompatibility with the singleness

of his personality, makes Christ's omniscience practically of no authority in disputed cases. The objector can always say, with reference to anything said to be established by Christ's assertion, that Christ may have said it in his human nature and may therefore have spoken erroneously. No doubt, it will always be difficult to frame any hypothesis which will fully and clearly solve all the problems which are suggested by the New Testament delineation of the nature and character of Christ. This is not strange, for he is set before us an altogether unique being: human and yet superhuman; one with God, and yet tempted in all points like other men; tempted, yet sinless.

Nevertheless it remains an ineffaceable fact that the Christian Church recognizes Christ as an infallible Teacher. He is the Light that lighteth every man, the Mediator who could say of himself, "I am the door of the sheep" (John x. 7). No metaphysical difficulty, encountered in trying to formulate a dogma which shall duly recognize both the human and the divine elements that seem to have entered into the personality of Christ, will ever persuade the Christian world that there was in him no such unique union of apparently contradictory attributes. Christians would never have made such valiant and persistent efforts to formulate the doctrine of a single person with two natures, unless there had been something in the phenomena of Jesus' personality which presented the problem and drove them to attempt a solution. That the attempts have not been entirely successful, that they have disagreed with one another, that they have often seemed to involve the dogmatician in self-contradiction; — all this, though it may make some despair

of sounding the depth of the mystery, still does not convince them that there is no mystery to be sounded. On the contrary, the abiding fact of the New Testament as the authentic record of Christ's life and mission, and the fact of Christianity as the outflow of that life and mission, furnish the elements of the problem; and the difficulty of solving it is only what the greatness and uniqueness of the facts might lead us to expect. So far from being deterred from believing in the facts because of the difficulty of adjusting them to one another, the Christian may almost adopt the paradox of the fiery Tertullian, and say, "I believe, because it is impossible".

3. Assuming now, what the New Testament plainly teaches, that Jesus was an altogether unique person in his mental and spiritual endowments, we have next to inquire how far his knowledge was limited. The question is not easy to answer. It is only incidentally and indirectly that any intimations of the limitation are given, and no general statement on the subject can be found in the New Testament. Any attempt to generalize with reference to it ends at the best only in a hypothesis the correctness of which cannot be rigidly tested. When, for example, Thomas Aquinas[1] says that Christ's human knowledge embraced everything actual in the world, but not the possible, the distinction is immediately seen to be one which cannot be verified by the statements of the New Testament, and which could not have been directly suggested by anything in them.

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[1] *Summa Theologiae*, Pars iii. Qu. x. 2.

How, then, shall we fix the limit? If we have no express information on the subject in the New Testament, and if any attempt to draw the line is at the best doomed to end in an unverifiable hypothesis, shall we not abandon the effort to formulate the doctrine? And yet no one can wholly avoid having some theory more or less well defined. A distinction now much in vogue is this: that Christ was subject to the limitations of his time in all matters of physical science, history, etc., and that his superior knowledge pertained only to moral and religious matters. The work of redeeming men from sin, it is said, being a purely spiritual one, required no extraordinary knowledge of matters having no relation to this work. Of what use was it for him to be acquainted with the topography of the North Pole? or with the true theory of light? or with all the details of human history?

This, although a mere hypothesis, not directly suggested or confirmed by anything in the New Testament, is yet plausible enough. According to it one may hold that Christ, as an ethical teacher and as a revealer of the divine character and purposes, was to be fully trusted, though in other things he was liable to error. It implies that he had a supernatural knowledge in matters pertaining to the Kingdom of God, but that in other things he had to learn and make acquisitions like other men. Does this hypothesis, now, agree with the reported facts? It is certainly in accord with the obvious fact that the mission of Christ was a spiritual one, and with the Biblical representation that in the spiritual sphere he is to be regarded as an infallible Master. But what about the

other side of the theory? When, for instance, it is narrated (Matt. xxi. 1—3, Mark xi. 1—3, Luke xix. 29—31) that Jesus sent his disciples from Bethphage to a village over against them, announcing to them that they would there find an ass tied which they were to bring to him, we have here a marked instance of superhuman knowledge, yet pertaining to a secular matter having, so far as one can see, no immediate relation to spiritual things. So when he sent his disciples into the city to make ready for the celebration of the Passover, and told them that they would there meet a man bearing a pitcher of water (Mark xiv. 13, Luke xxii. 10), we have a similar instance of a foreknowledge of a contingent and apparently indifferent circumstance — a knowledge not explained by the general proposition that Jesus was supernaturally endowed as to moral and religious truth only. Or again, when (Matt. xvii. 27) Jesus told Peter to catch a fish and find a shekel in its mouth, and when (Luke v. 4—7, John xxi. 6) he gave the disciples instruction how to cast their nets so as to catch an astonishingly large number of fishes, can the preternatural knowledge here displayed be regarded as directly concerned with matters vital to his heavenly mission?

Should it be said that in these latter cases the foreknowledge was involved in an intended miracle — that Christ must have known what he was purposing to do, though he might not know things respecting which he had no such purpose, the objection refutes itself. For if Jesus was able to know what would happen whenever he intended to work a miracle; if he knew, before he said, "Peace, be still", that the

storm on the lake would at once cease; if he knew, when he ordered the five thousand to sit down on the grass, that a miraculous supply of food would be furnished to them; if he knew that the blind man would recover his sight after washing in the pool of Siloam, — why, then his knowledge must at least have been co-ordinate with his power. The possession of supernatural power involves supernatural knowledge as a part of itself. And however true it may be that that power was exercised, not wantonly, but in order to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God, yet the *power* to work miracles implies a lordship over nature and man which involves a supernatural *knowledge*, possessed even when the miraculous power was not exercised, — unless indeed we are to suppose that his working of miracles was a hap-hazard, spasmodic performance, entered upon under the impulse of momentary excitement without his being quite sure, before he began, whether his effort would be successful. But since this was not the case, since Jesus was never more calm and sure of himself than when he was doing his mightiest works, it must be concluded that he wrought them in the consciousness of possessing a fulness of power the exercise of which was restrained and regulated by a wise regard to the spiritual interests of men. And then it follows, further, that, as the limited number of miracles wrought implies the power to work an indefinite number, so the supernatural knowledge of things in the natural world must have been vastly greater than was disclosed in the particular miracles themselves.

But apart from these intimations of the Biblical record itself, this sharp distinction between know-

ledge of spiritual, and knowledge of secular, things can hardly maintain itself. It cannot be carried out. The line cannot be drawn between purely religious and purely scientific knowledge. Every man's religious life is interwoven with his physical condition and with his relation to the outward world. And he who would understand fully the one must also fully know the other. It would be almost inconceivable that an eminent moralist should be ignorant of secular affairs. The more authoritative he would be in his utterance of ethical truths and maxims, the more thoroughly must he know men as they are, with all their physical weaknesses, their mental peculiarities, and their outward temptations. And if Christ was to be far more than a great moralist; if he was to be the infallible Head of a kingdom of saints; if he was to be the universal Judge of men, — *a fortiori* would it seem to have been necessary that he should have an extraordinary knowledge of all the complicated relations of human life. It would seem incredible that he should have an intuitive and infallible knowledge of truth in the abstract, and yet be obliged to depend, for his knowledge of the practical application of it, upon the toilsome and slow acquisition of historical and sociological knowledge, and be liable to make mistakes after all.

Moreover, when we look at the subject from the point of view of Christ's special mission, we are led to a similar inference. What qualifications were essential to the execution of it? Perfect sinlessness, no doubt, was one. And the fulfilment of this condition is distinctly attested in the New Testament. Now freedom from sin is indeed conceivable in a

person of limited intellectual capacities, as *vice versa* intellectual eminence is often found in conjunction with a low state of morals. But is it easily thinkable that for such a unique work as that to which Christ was appointed there should not have been given him also exceptional mental endowments? Can we think of him as a man of inferior, or even of only ordinary, intellectual power? Entirely apart from any question about strict omniscience, the unparalleled work committed to him must, it would seem, have required not only a quick conscience, but also extraordinary sagacity of mind. Even in his capacity as teacher of morals we cannot conceive of him as commanding respect for his authority unless he was able to inspire peculiar respect for his intellectual greatness. A weak-minded man may be very good; but he is not therefore qualified to set himself up as a teacher of ethics and religion. To instruct, and to instruct with authority, requires a mind able to grasp truth with clearness and to state it with force. That Christ's was such a mind is plainly enough indicated in the New Testament. We can well understand that the people were astonished at his teaching, and that his answers to cavillers were so pertinent and crushing that they were intimidated and durst ask him no more questions.

Now although Jesus' primary work was a religious one, it is unwarrantable to assume that his intellectual powers were adapted only to grasp religious truth. Even if it were conceivable that one could apprehend religious truth with the clearness and infallibility which characterized him, and at the same time have no peculiar ability to apprehend other

kinds of truth, yet such a combination of strength and weakness would be an anomaly for the fact of which we should require peculiarly strong proof. The presumption is well nigh insurmountable that his mind was one which quickly seized all the truth that came before it, and seized it with a precision and accuracy that were as marked as his general superiority of endowment.

It does not necessarily follow from these considerations that Jesus was actually acquainted with all departments of truth, so that, if he had chosen, he could have propounded correct and complete systems of geology, astronomy, chemistry, and biology. While we have no right dogmatically to affirm that he was as ignorant of such sciences as his contemporaries in general, yet on the other hand we have no evidence that he was not. He had no occasion to treat these topics scientifically. What he knew, or did not know, concerning matters entirely foreign to his special work, it is idle to speculate. But when we consider truths and aspects of truth which must or naturally might have presented themselves to his mind, and especially such as were directly or indirectly connected with the themes with which he had to deal, it is difficult to see how a proper Christian faith can conceive of him as falling into error and inculcating it. At all events, it must be insisted on as scarcely questionable, that Christ was distinctly conscious of the extent of his own knowledge — *he knew what he knew*, and never made positive affirmations unless he was sure of the correctness of what he said. If he was ignorant of some things, he did not pretend to know them, and did not make conjectural statements about them.

What he taught he taught with the positiveness of full conviction and assurance; he spoke with authority. There is no guesswork in what he said. He did not speak doubtfully and hypothetically. We might expect him to refrain from discoursing about things which did not concern the main work for which he was sent; but when he did speak there is the strongest presumption that he could always say, what he once did say, with reference to his teachings, "We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen" (John iii. 11).

At all events all Christians must assume that as to religious matters — matters with which his mission was especially concerned — Christ's knowledge was complete and authoritative. It is simply impossible to regard him as the perfect Prophet, Priest, and King, as the Anointed of God, as the one who had a right to summon all men to him and professed to bring light and salvation to all men — in short, to regard him as being what the New Testament represents him as being — unless he had not only moral purity, but also a thorough knowledge of the things which concerned the kingdom that he came to establish. If he was without such knowledge, he could not have spoken with authority, nor have demanded our implicit trust and obedience.

III. Let us now attempt to make an application of the results to which we have come. To what extent are the utterances of Christ and the New Testament writers of binding force upon us in our criticism of the Old Testament? Without attempting to deal particularly with every question that can be raised, we may lay down the following general prop-

ositions as embodying principles which cannot reasonably be gainsaid.

1. Fidelity to the Christian faith requires us to assume the Old Testament to be the record, vehicle, or product of a divine revelation preparatory to the Christian, and fulfilled in it. Everywhere in the New Testament is this asserted or assumed. Christ affirms that he is not come to destroy, but to fulfil, the law and the prophets (Matt. v. 17). The commands of the law are directly ascribed by him to God (Matt. xv. 4—6, Mark vii. 8, 13). It is everywhere declared or implied that Jesus is the Messiah promised or foreshadowed by the Old Testament writers (John i. 45, Matt. xxi. 4, 5, Mark i. 1—3, x. 47, xi. 10, Luke iii. 4—6, Rom. i. 2); and in general all parts of the Old Testament are said to be prophetic of the Messianic dispensation (Luke xxiv. 25—27, 44, John v. 39, 46, Acts xxvi. 22, Rom. iii. 21, x. 4, Gal. iii. 24, Col. ii. 17, Heb. i. 1, iii. 5, viii. 5, ix. 8, 9, x. 1).

This is something so obvious to every reader of the New Testament that it scarcely requires proof. Whatever may be the truth as to the ethnic religions, they are certainly neither in the Old Testament nor in the New recognized as divine in any such sense as the Abrahamic and the Mosaic dispensations. God is affirmed to have spoken of old time, not to the nations in general, but to the forefathers of the Hebrews (Heb. i. 1). Whoever affirms[1] that the Hebrew religion was merely one religion among many, having no more basis in a special divine rev-

[1] As e. g. Kuenen does in his *Religion of Israel.*

elation than the others, can do so only by contradicting the plain affirmations of Christ and his apostles. He cannot, therefore, do it as a Christian. Christianity professes to be founded on the Old Testament revelation and to be its fulfilment. If this profession is false, then Christianity itself is false. Whatever imperfections may be admitted to belong to the old dispensation (Heb. viii. 7), it is none the less expressly pronounced a divine institution, the special medium through which God's gracious purposes of illumination and salvation were communicated to men.

Therefore anything calling itself a critical study of the Old Testament which comes to the conclusion that the Old Testament religion was in no special sense the product of a divine revelation is essentially unchristian criticism. It is indeed easy enough, if one will, to make out a plausible case against the proposition that Christ's person and ministry were a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. In *form* the prophecies and the alleged fulfilments are often so unlike that, considered by themselves, they might easily be pronounced to have no special relation to one another. Jesus was not such a Messiah as the Jews had been led by their own Scriptures to expect. A critic, looking at the subject entirely apart from the allegations of Christ and his disciples, can in a multitude of cases find a discrepancy between the prophecy and the pretended fulfilment so great as apparently to vitiate the assumption of any pre-ordained connection. And when we come to the *types* of the Old Testament, the critic has a still easier task. He can argue very plausibly that the assumption of a typical relation between persons, institutions, or events

of the Old Covenant and corresponding ones in the New is a mere fancy, having no more basis in the things themselves than might be affirmed of multitudes of other circumstances in human history. And yet the fact is that the Christian Scriptures, and Christ as reported in those Scriptures, assert that there is such a typical relation.

This, then, is a crucial point. It may freely be granted that a man who comes to the study of the Bible without faith in Christianity, and who compares, for example, the ceremonial law of the Pentateuch with the life and work of Jesus Christ, might with apparent reason argue that there is no evident typical connection, or even no noticeable resemblance of any sort, between the two. He might propound it as the result of criticism that it is altogether a mistake to speak of the law as in any proper sense typical of the gospel. And so long as he considers the question uninfluenced by the New Testament's own representations, it will be impossible to dislodge him from his position. And even when he is told that, however it may seem to him, he certainly has the declarations of the New Testament against him, he can reply that then Christ and his followers were mistaken in their typological notions. He might regard them either as deceivers or as fanatics; but in either case he would say that he is not bound to let his judgment be decided by an opinion which contradicts his own critical insight.

But the case is far different with the *Christian* critic. By the very fact of being a Christian he is bound to have respect to the interpretation which Christ and his disciples put upon the relation between

the two covenants. Even though in some cases the interpretation may seem to be arbitrary and far-fetched, yet the general fact that Christ and his apostles affirmed a prophetic and typical relation of the Jewish to the Christian dispensation is indisputable; and this fact must be to the Christian scholar authoritative. His part is, therefore, not to search for points of unlikeness, but for points of likeness. If he is a Christian, he must bow to the judgment of his Master, and learn to find in the Old Testament institutions a shadow of the things to come (Col. ii. 17, Heb. x. 1). The alternative is sharp and clear: either thus to submit, or to renounce the Christian faith itself.

For this is most certainly not a case in which one can plead that Christ may have been ignorant, and his view susceptible of correction by more critical minds. His doctrine concerning the Old Testament as embodying a revelation foreshadowing his own is fundamental and all-pervading. If, professing to come as the consummate Revealer of the character and saving grace of God, he was guilty of an enormous blunder in supposing himself to have been prefigured and predicted in the Mosaic and prophetic Scriptures; if he did not know what the fact was when he always spoke of the Israelitish history as one that was under special divine guidance; in short, if he was completely mistaken in regard to the Old Testament dispensation, — then it is simply impossible to yield him implicit confidence in regard to his own professed revelations. In what he taught concerning the Old Testament he was professing to give instruction about God and God's dealings with his chosen people, about God's commands and promises as found in the Old Testa-

ment writings, and about a divinely ordained prefiguring of himself and of his kingdom in those Scriptures. If in all this he was guilty of error; if modern criticism is able to show that he did not understand the subject he was talking about, — then it would be hard to see wherein his opinions and assertions can be implicitly trusted at all. If he had been left in *ignorance* about the Old Testament and its relation to himself, the case would be strange enough; but that he should be ignorant and not know himself to be ignorant; that he should profess to be able to make authoritative disclosures on a subject on which he was ill-informed or not informed at all, — this would be something worse than simply a limitation of knowledge. It would thoroughly discredit him as an authoritative messenger of God. If he could so err as regards the past, why not equally, or even more, as regards the future? If he thoroughly mistook the import of Jewish history, what guarantee can we have that in his general ethical and religious teachings he is any more to be trusted?

But, it may be urged, perhaps the error of conception respecting the relation of the Old Testament to the New is merely that of Christ's disciples, and that they have misrepresented him in their reports of his teaching. Is it not possible that they have, even though unconsciously, imputed to him conceptions of the Old Testament which came from their own Jewish training? May we not still assume that Christ himself fell into no error and took the same view of the Old Testament which is taken by the intelligent modern scholar who finds in it no real type or prediction of Christianity?

This would be a desperate shift. In the first place, inasmuch as Jesus was a very different Messiah from the one his disciples had expected, and the kingdom which he instituted quite unlike the kingdom which they had been longing for, it is inconceivable that they should have come to interpret the Old Testament as pointing forward to *such* a Messianic kingdom, unless Jesus himself had so interpreted it. If by the force of his personality and the impressiveness of his teachings he so won their confidence that they could not but trust him, then we can understand how they could come to find the Old Testament to be full of reference to him; otherwise not. But, in the second place, if the objector's hypothesis were true, we should be left without any warrant for assuming Christ's infallibility at all. If his disciples were so dull learners that they continually misrepresented his deeds and words; if on so important a matter as the one now in question they could describe him as taking a view utterly different from the one which he really held, then it is hard to see what solid ground we have for imputing any unique authority to Christ at all. The apostles represent him as sinless, it is true; but may not this conception of him have been one of their misconceptions? They declare him to have been the promised Messiah; but may not this have been one of their mistakes? They report a great number of his alleged addresses and predictions; but how do we know whether we can trust any of these reports? In short, what ground have we for solid confidence in anything which they relate?

The problem with which we are now dealing is

quite different from that which is raised when it is alleged that Christ's use of the Old Testament is different from that of his disciples. It is often said that in the Epistles, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find fanciful, rabbinical, or allegorical uses of the Old Testament such as Christ himself was never guilty of. Without discussing in detail any of these alleged instances of misapplication of the Old Testament, it is sufficient to say that, even if it should be conceded that they are real, they can at the most be regarded as only instances of an *excessive* application of the principle of interpretation which they had learned from Christ himself. *He taught them* that the Messianic dispensation was foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Be it so that in their carrying out of this lesson they sometimes went to an extreme, all the more evident is it that they got their general instructions from Christ, and that he really entertained the conception which is attributed to him, viz., that the Old Testament as a whole was predictive of him.

The foregoing shows what judgment is to be pronounced on such an utterance as that of Kuenen,[1] when he says, "For us the Israelitish is one of those [principal] religions, nothing less, but also nothing more". That the Old Testament claims for the Hebrew religion a peculiar divine origin and sanction, he admits; but he reminds us that other religions make the same claim. With reference to these others he says, "It does not follow from this [claim of supernatural origin] that the description of those

[1] *Religion of Israel*, vol. i. p. 5.

forms of religion must start from that belief. No one expects or requires this for Buddhism or Islam; with what right can it be demanded with respect to Judaism and Christianity?" [1] To this naïve question the obvious answer is that the right to demand such an assumption with respect to Judaism and Christianity is derived from the fact that *Christ himself made it* respecting both Judaism and his own revelation. One can, if he choose, set at nought Christ's declarations on this point; but he *cannot do so as a Christian.* A critic of this sort may be better than his theory. He may have a Christian spirit; but certain it is that such a view of Judaism and Christianity is not a Christian view. It cannot be held together with thorough loyalty to Christ.

2. It follows necessarily from the foregoing that fidelity to the Christian faith requires one to hold that the history of the Israelites and their ancestors, as given in the Old Testament, is substantially true. Substantially, I say; for there is no necessity of assuming that there is absolutely no error or inaccuracy in the book. Opinions may differ on the question whether the Old Testament is strictly infallible, without any abandonment of faith in Christ. But one cannot look upon the Old Testament as in general, or very largely, unhistorical — a compound of myth, legend, fiction, and history — without contradicting Christ's view of the matter. All that he and his apostles have to say respecting the Hebrew Scriptures implies that these are regarded as recording historical facts. If, as some think (though without

[1] *Ibid.* p. 6.

conclusive reasons), certain parts (as Ruth, Esther, and Jonah) are historical only in form, but are in fact fictions having a religious moral, such cases must be regarded as subordinate and exceptional, and as not examples of the general character of the Old Testament. The collection as a whole must be historical, or else these supposed fictions would be unintelligible.

That Christianity sprang from Judaism is denied by only a few eccentric scholars. Christ and his disciples so conceived of the matter; and all sober judges must give assent to the proposition. But this implies that we know something about Jewish history; and if so, we derive our knowledge almost wholly from the Old Testament. Moreover, as we have seen, Christ and his immediate followers looked on the Old Testament in general as prophetic of Christianity. This holds true not only of the prophetic writings strictly so called, but of the historical and poetical as well. The faith of Abraham, the training of Jacob, the deliverance of the Israelites in Egypt and from Egypt, the legislation of Moses, the chastisement of the people for their repeated apostasies, the deliverers raised up, such as Barak, Gideon, and Samuel, the history of David, the vicissitudes of Judah and Israel in the monarchical period, the Assyrian and the Babylonish captivities, and the subsequent restoration, — these and other events were preparatory to the new dispensation. They lay at the foundation of the prophecies and the religious poetry of the Israelites.

This assumption of a prophetic relation of the Old Testament to the New implies that it was *real history* which was said to be fulfilled. If the Old Testament

is to any considerable extent a compilation of unhistorical productions, it would have been little less than mockery for Jesus and his disciples to speak as they did of the prophetic and typical character of the Old Testament. One may indeed refer, by way of illustration, to classical myths and fables. So long as they are understood to be such, no harm can be done by such a reference. But in the New Testament the histories and prophecies of the Old Testament are represented as real types and shadows of the coming Messianic economy. It is repeatedly insisted that they *must* be fulfilled. It is asserted that there is a divine plan and purpose linking the two economies together. This could not be asserted if the things said to be fulfilled were unrealities, fanciful pictures, or mere myths and legends. God is affirmed to be the guiding spirit in both covenants. It is impossible to conceive that according to the divine idea there could be any necessary connection between fictitious stories and the solemn realities of the Christian religion. There is no escape from the alternative: Either the Old Testament history is in general a true history, or else Christ and the New Testament writers labored under a gross delusion.

It may indeed be said that all the nations have had their myths, and that the myths have a religious origin and meaning. Why, then, it is asked, should we not suppose that the Hebrews also had their myths? Well, very probably they did; but when it is affirmed that the Old Testament is the repository of such myths, it need only be replied that from beginning to end the Old Testament is destitute of a mythical character. Even though here and there one

may be able to find what seems like a mythical feature, nothing is more certain than that in general such features are entirely absent. It is only by a violent stretch of fancy, or by a distortion of the record, that the simple narratives of the Old Testament can be construed as anything but historical. Historical at any rate they purport to be; as historical they were universally understood by the Jews; and when Jesus refers to them, he refers to them as records of historical facts.

Efforts are indeed made to reconcile the authority of Christ with a doctrine of the Old Testament which assumes that it is largely unhistorical. But however sincere the efforts may be, they cannot be successful. They contradict the obvious implications and plain declarations of the New Testament; they do violence to the Christian's common sense. When, for example, we are asked to believe that Christ, in referring to the Old Testament narratives, was only accommodating himself to the popular notions, it can only be replied that, if this is true, then he was guilty of deceptive conduct utterly inconsistent with the simplicity, sincerity, and boldness which are everywhere ascribed to him. He certainly made the impression that he believed in the authenticity of the Old Testament. Moreover, he implied his belief in the historical reality of Old Testament persons and events, not only when he might have been imagined to be accommodating himself to a prevalent belief, but equally when he was opposing the prevalent belief. When he said (John viii. 56), "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad", he was making an affirmation which contra-

dicted, instead of confirming, the notions of his hearers; so that the implication that he believed Abraham to be a historic person cannot be shaken by the supposition that he was only accommodating himself to current views. He was therefore in this point in disagreement with the modern critics [1] who think they have discovered that Abraham is a purely imaginary personage. And this is only one example among a multitude.

The only remaining shift is to suppose that, while Jesus himself regarded the Old Testament as an authentic record of Jewish history, he was mistaken in so thinking. But, as has been already remarked, if he could be in error on so important a matter as that, then he must have been quite unequal to the part which he undertook to perform. If he could think that to be the authentic history of a divine revelation which was in reality mostly a tissue of myth, legend, poetic fancy, and wanton fiction, then it is impossible to render to him implicit trust when he professes to give us a new and perfect revelation.

So much in general. The case is somewhat different when one undertakes to settle all minor critical questions by adducing the authority of Christ. For example, on the question, whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch as we have it, one can hardly insist that Christ has definitely pronounced a judgment. Twice indeed (Mark x. 5, John v. 46), in reference to special points, he speaks of Moses as having written; but he nowhere says that Moses wrote all the five books that have borne his name. It would even be possible

[1] E. g., Wellhausen, *Geschichte Israels*, p. 332.

in these two cases to understand him as only speaking according to the popular conception, and meaning only the book commonly ascribed to Moses. The main critical question, however, is not, whether Moses himself *wrote* the book of the law, but whether he *gave* the law. And on this point Jesus seems to have spoken explicitly enough. He uniformly speaks of Moses as the giver of the law, not only in general, as when he says (John vii. 19, cf. Luke xvi. 29), "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?" but in particular, as when he mentions certain laws as having been given by Moses (Matt. viii. 4, xix. 8, John vii. 23). He says that the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat (Matt. xxiii. 2), thus recognizing him as the great original lawgiver. Entirely apart, therefore, from the question, whether the whole Pentateuch was committed to writing by Moses, we have the same ground for assuming that Christ regarded the legislative part of the book as Mosaic that we have for assuming that in general he regarded the Old Testament as authentic. And that his disciples took the same view needs no demonstration.

The case just considered is therefore different from that of a mere question of literary authorship; it is a question of history. It is not immaterial whether Moses or somebody living a thousand years after him originated the laws that were generally ascribed to him; but in the case of a particular psalm or prophecy it might have been a matter of little consequence whether the popular impression was correct or not. As to the question, for example, concerning the authorship of Isaiah xl—lxvi., there is

little doubt that it was in Christ's time generally supposed to have been written by the same Isaiah who prophesied under Hezekiah. In the New Testament these chapters are frequently quoted and ascribed to Isaiah (Matt. iii. 3, viii. 17, xii. 17, Luke iii. 4, iv. 17, John i. 23, xii. 38, Acts viii. 28, Rom. x. 16, 20). And hardly any stress can be laid on the fact that, when Jesus himself is introduced as quoting Isaiah by name, the quotations are all from the other part of the book (Matt. xiii. 14, xv. 7, Mark vii. 6), while, when he does quote Isa. liii. 12 as referring to himself (Luke xxii. 37), he does not mention the name of the prophet. The New Testament writers, and presumably Jesus himself, spoke as if the chapters in question were written by Isaiah.

Does this fact, then, settle the question of authorship and preclude all critical examination of it? By no means. This quoting of Isa. xl.—lxvi. as Isaiah's prophecy does not necessarily prove more than that the chapters in question were currently attributed to him. It simply served to identify the passage quoted. For aught we know the intelligent Jews of Christ's time, and Christ himself, may have had doubts about the Isaian authorship of those chapters. But even if they had, there was no urgent need of their expressing the doubt. The important thing was the matter of the prophecy, not the author of it, nor the time when it was uttered. The passages in question could be quoted as prophecies of Isaiah, just as now passages from the Iliad or Odyssey may be referred to as the language of Homer even by one who doubts whether any one named Homer wrote any part of those books.

This case is certainly materially different from that of the Pentateuch. The Old Testament itself cannot be adduced as giving any express information concerning the authorship of Isa. xl.—lxvi. This portion of the book is introduced by no title and no name of the author; it follows abruptly the historical chapters xxxvi.—xxxix., so that it is intrinsically not unreasonable to suppose that the writings of a later prophet may have become accidentally appended to those of Isaiah and afterwards mistakenly attributed to that prophet. The *prima facie* evidence, it is true, is certainly in favor of attributing the chapters in question to Isaiah; but no stress is laid upon the authorship in the book itself or anywhere else. The Pentateuchal laws, on the contrary, are expressly and with almost superfluous repetition ascribed to Moses; a detailed history of the previous life of the lawgiver is prefixed to it; the historic verity of a large part of the Old Testament is involved in the question, whether Moses was the promulgator of the Pentateuchal legislation. It is a matter of great historical consequence whether these laws originated with Moses and were the foundation of the Jewish church and state, or whether they sprang up, no one knows how or when, many hundreds of years later, after the development of the people had passed its prime. The fact that Christ and his disciples accepted the Old Testament in general as a history of God's dealings with his people is an endorsement of its general truthfulness; and the history of the Mosaic legislation is too important a part of the record to be treated as a matter of indifference. Both indirectly, when they speak of the Old Testament Scriptures in general as of divine

authority, and directly, when they speak of the law as having been given by Moses, they vouch for the substantial truthfulness of the Mosaic history.

But the general endorsement of the trustworthiness of the Old Testament on the part of Christ and the New Testament writers does not preclude a critical examination of particular parts and the raising of the question, whether there may not be inaccuracies in some of the details. It does not forbid an investigation into the history of the composition of the Old Testament books, or a revision of traditional opinions as to the authorship of them. It does not require us to adopt any particular theory of the inspiration of the Old Testament writers. But it does require of Christians that they regard those ostensibly historical books as *really* historical, and not a conglomerate of myth, allegory, poetry, and fiction in the guise of history. Since Jesus refers to them as records of facts, since he treats the Old Testament history as the foundation of his own gospel, and as a revelation of divine truth which it was his mission to develop and fulfil, faith in him must involve faith in his representation of the general truthfulness of the Old Testament.

3. It is involved in the foregoing that it is inconsistent with the Christian faith to hold that deceit and fraud played an important part in the formation of the Old Testament Canon. Faith in Christ's authority forbids us to believe that the Old Testament consists largely or predominantly of the writings of men who deliberately distorted and falsified history, forged codes of laws, and succeeded by cunning trickery in imposing upon the Jews, as of divine ori-

gin and authority, what otherwise could never have gained acceptance at all. A collection of books consisting in great part of such productions cannot possibly be regarded as entitled to any peculiar respect. Still less can they be held up as of inspired authority. But Christ and the New Testament writers do speak of them as of divine authority. Therefore the opposing critical view must be abandoned, or else Christ as a religious teacher must be deemed untrustworthy. This is the short and simple argument which cannot be invalidated by smooth words, and which in the long run, in spite of all mystifications, will commend itself to the plain common sense of Christian men.

But we are often told that the theory here referred to is established, and that therefore all fair-minded men are bound to accept it and to make the best of it. To which it must be answered, in the first place, that, if the theory *is* thoroughly established, then it certainly becomes a serious question how long faith in Christ as an all-sufficient Redeemer can maintain itself. No doubt (as already remarked) one may take the ground that Christ's sufficiency as a spiritual guide and Saviour does not necessarily involve his infallibility in regard to historical and critical questions. And therefore it may be that for a considerable time and to a great extent a sincere faith in Christ may co-exist with a theory of the Old Testament entirely inconsistent with the view entertained and expressed by Christ himself. But the more distinctly one realizes what is implied in this disagreement with Jesus, the more questionable does it become how the two beliefs can be permanently

maintained together. As we have already had occasion to insist, what Christ thought and taught concerning the Jewish history and religion was not a matter of indifference. He claimed the same credence when he spoke of God's dealing with the Jews as when he propounded his own doctrines and foretold future things. It is difficult to understand how he can be implicitly trusted in what he professes to do and to teach as the founder of a new dispensation, if he is discovered to be entirely at fault as regards the older dispensation. Such implicit trust may indeed be accorded to him, even while his doctrine of the Old Testament is rejected; but it cannot but be that those who try to occupy this position will soon come to see that it is an illogical and indefensible one. If criticism can prove Christ to have been mistaken in his conceptions of what God had done as to an earlier revelation, it may equally undertake to correct him in reference to what he propounds as his own revelation. And sooner or later this will be the result, if the modern radical critical theory of the Old Testament is to be adopted as the true one. Jesus will be esteemed more or less highly, but men will not trust him as an infallible authority in anything. His teachings will be more or less admired, but will be accepted only as they meet the approval of the critical judgment. What the Biblical records say of him will be believed only in so far as the critic chooses to pronounce the record credible. In short, Christ will cease to be the Lord and Master that he himself professes to be (John xiii. 13). He will cease to be the ultimate object and supreme standard of the Christian faith.

But to the allegation that the radical critical theory of the Old Testament is established, it is to be replied, in the second place, that it is *not* established. It is a mere hypothesis — supported, no doubt, by many plausible arguments — but still a mere hypothesis, and one which, as is shown by the nature of the case and by the history of the discussion, can never become more than a hypothesis. It is so revolutionary in its character that it would be *a priori* unlikely that it could ever displace all opposing views; and when it is found that its defenders in advocating it create, to say the least, as great difficulties as they relieve, it is on their part quite unwarrantable, or even an act of effrontery, to call upon the Christian world to make an unconditional surrender to their theory.

What, then, are the facts? It does not consist with our purpose to discuss the subject at large; but it will not be out of place to bestow a brief glance on some of the most conspicuous difficulties of the Kuenen-Wellhausen hypothesis. (1). It has to meet at the outset an immense counter-presumption. It comes into collision with the uniform declarations of both the Old and the New Testament. It undertakes to reverse the opinions which have prevailed for thousands of years, and which until recently no one has seen any adequate reason for giving up. An immense burden of proof rests on any one who untertakes to overthrow a conception of the Old Testament so long entertained by both Jews and Christians, and fully endorsed by our Saviour and his apostles. Until proved beyond controversy, it must be content to remain a hypothesis. And it has most certainly not

been proved to be true. It has been met at every important point, its assumptions denied, its arguments refuted, and its fallacies exposed.

(2) It does not predispose a genuine Christian in favor of the revolutionary hypothesis that it is, either tacitly or avowedly, founded upon a disbelief in the supernatural. Books which contain narratives of miraculous events are for that reason pronounced unworthy of confidence. Such narratives are regarded as conclusive evidence that the books are of late origin recording legends as if they were history. This is expressly avowed by Kuenen, and more or less distinctly implied by others. Of course the same assumption, when logically carried out, must lead to the rejection of the New Testament miracles also, and ultimately to the abandonment of the Christian faith.

(3). Moreover, the principal argument for the new doctrine, however plausibly it may be urged, is not conclusive. It is derived from the absence of reference to the ceremonial law, the apparent ignorance of it, and even the constant violations of it, on the part of the Jewish people up to the time of the captivity. But it is manifest that, even if the absence of all evidence of the existence of a ceremonial law were as certain as is alleged, that would still not be a decisive proof of the non-existence of the law. If the law had been constantly and strictly enforced, the historians might still have had little occasion to make reference to it. But is it so unusual a thing for a people to disobey its own laws? It would be strange indeed if the Jews — a people constantly denounced by their own historians and prophets as

a stubborn and rebellious people — had always carefully observed the requirements either of the ceremonial or of the moral law. And should it be insisted that, if there had been any ceremonial law enacted by Moses, it would have been particularly referred to, and the violation of it expressly specified in the historical and prophetical books, it may be replied that, by the same reasoning, one can prove the Decalogue not to have been promulgated by Moses. For *nowhere in the prophecies, and scarcely anywhere in the histories, is there any reference to the Decalogue.* There are references in profusion to statutes and commandments which have been transgressed; but the references are general, and might be understood to include the ceremonial law as well as the moral.

(4) Furthermore, in order to prove that there was such a universal ignorance, non-observance, and consequently non-existence, of the so-called Mosaic law, it is necessary for the critics to reject the testimony of many parts of the Old Testament itself. They assume and assert that the Deuteronomic code was unknown till the time of Josiah, and the Levitical till the time of Ezra. But when the book of Joshua is adduced as proving that the Mosaic law was known in the period following the exodus, they reply that that book belongs to the Pentateuch and must share its fate. When the books of Chronicles are appealed to as showing that the Jewish people before the time of Josiah and Ezra knew, and more or less observed, the Levitical law, we are told that those books were a late and mendacious production written for the very purpose of making the false impression that the newly concocted Levitical code was really

of Mosaic origin. Moreover, when the very historical books (Judges, Samuel, Kings) from which the *argumentum e silentio* is chiefly derived are alleged to give evidence that the tabernacle and ritual services according to the law of Moses were not unknown before the time of Josiah, it is replied that all these books have been "worked over", so that, whenever anything in them implies the existence of the Pentateuchal laws, it must be assumed to have been interpolated after those laws had been gotten up in the times of Josiah and Ezra. When it is shown that Deuteronomy makes reference to an earlier legislation which can be none other than the Levitical, the argument is met by silence or by an inadequate explaining away of the alleged evidence. When references to the Mosaic law are found in the earlier prophetical books, it is regarded as sufficient to reply that, the late origin of the law having been demonstrated, such references can have no weight with the critic.[1] In a clear case, as when 1 Kings xi. 2 expressly quotes Deut. xvii. 17, the passage is simply declared to be an interpolation. The same is done, when 1 Sam. ii. 22 and 1 Kings viii. 4 make distinct mention of the tabernacle as a historical fact, contrary to the critical assumption that there was no Mosaic tabernacle. When by a strained exegesis the most obvious meaning of a pasage can be explained away, this is done, as in the case of Hos. viii. 12, which speaks of an extensive written law, and 2 Kings xii. 16, Hos. iv. 8, which imply that sin-offerings

[1] Says Wellhausen (*Geschichte Israels*, p. 11), "Passages out of Amos and Hosea may be adduced which are supposed to show acquaintance with the Code of the Priests; upon him, however, who holds them to be earlier than it they can make no impression."

were known before the time of Ezekiel. Psalm xl., which bears the same testimony (verse 6), is transported into the post-exilic period. And the same is done with the book of Joel (though it has always been regarded as one of the oldest of the prophetical books) because Joel is observed to speak respectfully of the priests, and bewails the famine especially because it threatens to cut off the meal-offering and the drink-offering (i. 13, ii. 14, 17). Why the later interpolators and redactors, if they had such free range among the earlier books and were so zealously anxious to furnish them with references to the Levitical code, did not make more thorough work with their reconstructions, does not appear.[1] But whatever is found

[1] Since the foregoing was written, the thought here rudimentally expressed has been developed with much force, though still very succinctly, by Henry Hayman D. D., who, in an article (in the New York *Independent* of April 28, 1892) on *Internal Difficulties of the New Theory of the Pentateuch*, urges against the critical doctrine of the Levitical Code the obvious fact that a *code* is precisely what the legislation in question is not. It treats the same topic in various places. What is laid down in one section is supplemented in another at a distance from it, or is repeated with no essential change, or is replaced by something different. "This treatment by repetitions, digressions, dismemberments, and insertions is not the exception so much as the rule, and gives the Mosaic legislation the interspersed and fragmentary character of a painted window, broken and patched together without design." If Ezra or priests of the exilic or post-exilic period regarded themselves as authorized to codify and complete the earlier legislation, what possible reason could they have had for leaving it in this disjointed, confused, and *un*codified state? As Dr. Hayman cogently puts the case, "Can any one conceive a priestly conclave, with nothing else to do, and ample time in which to do it, turning out such a piece of work as this for the practical guidance of a restored community?"

in them which conflicts with the critical theory is got out of the way by hook or by crook. The argument, reduced to a simple form is this: The Levitical code must be of post-exilic origin, because there is no evidence of its existence in the pre-exilic books. Therefore whenever evidences of the existence of the Levitical law are found in the pre-exilic books, they must be pronounced interpolations of a later time! This may be astute criticism, but it can hardly pass for sound logic.

(5). But this is not all. We are asked to believe that whole books of the Old Testament were composed by cunning forgers, who took the greatest pains to give their productions the coloring of a remote time, including the reproduction of the ancient phraseology and type of doctrine, and a minute conformity to the local and historical circumstances of that time, so that it is difficult for the acutest critics to detect any conclusive evidence of the alleged late origin. It is true, such evidence is diligently looked for, and much is found which, in appearance, lends color to the critical theory. Thus, for example, in the book of Deuteronomy there are in the introductory narrative chapters certain explanatory observations which seem to interrupt the connection of Moses' discourse — observations such as now-a-days would be put into the form of footnotes. And they seem, moreover, to have been written by persons to whom the events commented on were somewhat distant. Instances of them are found in ii. 10—12, 20—23, iii. 9—11, 13, 14. Now respecting such passages it is proper to institute a critical inquiry. Three suppositions are possible: either (i) that the passages, notwithstanding their

apparently late origin, were written by Moses, or some other very early writer, who also wrote the rest of the book; or (ii) that they are editorial annotations of a later period than that of the book in general; or (iii) that the whole book is proved to be of late origin by the fact that these passages must have been written long after the time of Moses. The critical theory under consideration assumes that only the third supposition is possible. But why not the second? Certainly not because it is a critical canon that every book of the Bible must be assumed to have remained forever in precisely the form which it first had. The critics who are so ready to postulate interpolations whenever they find it convenient, and profess to discover evidences of numerous writings pieced together, single words and phrases inserted here and there, passages transposed and passages added or omitted — such critics surely cannot find it unreasonable to suppose that in the cases above mentioned a few editorial observations have found their way into the text of Deuteronomy. Which is intrinsically most probable — that editorial additions should be inserted in an ancient book for the sake of explanation, or adaptation to modern circumstances? or that interpolations should be made for no other purpose than to falsify history and to deceive the reader with regard to the date of the book? Or must it be laid down as a critical canon, that the hypothesis of interpolations and redactions may be freely resorted to for the purpose of *overthrowing* the traditional view, but never for the purpose of *maintaining* it?

Moreover, the theory in question not only holds a large part of the Old Testament to be the work of

forgers, but it assumes a subtlety of deception on the part of the writers which becomes at times absolutely startling. Not only is a general historical setting supposed to have been invented for the forged legislation; not only, for example, are the Levitical laws uniformly worded as if designed for life in an encampment; but episodes in the history are assumed to have been invented for the sole purpose, as it would seem, of blinding the reader more effectually to the true character of the book. Thus the story (Lev. x. 16—20) about Moses searching for the goat of the sin-offering must, according to the theory, have been a wanton and apparently useless invention, but designed (if it had any design) the more thoroughly to give to the Levitical legislation the aspect of having been Mosaic. So the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. xvi.) must be regarded as a fiction without the least shadow of foundation. If the critical theory concerning the tabernacle and the offering of incense is true, this event could not have happened, and the invention can only be attributed to a sort of "superfluity of naughtiness" on the part of the author of the book.[1]

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[1] On Prof. W. Robertson Smith's "legal fiction" theory of the origin of the Levitical laws, what shall be said of these and other such stories? He tells us (*The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 387) that, when the laws were first promulgated, they were presented as ordinances of Moses, but that "every one knew that they were not so". What, then, one may well ask, did the people think about these stories? If the legislation was understood to be ascribed to Moses only as a mere form — as a "legal fiction" — then these stories which belonged to the same Priests' Code must, it would seem, have been also understood to be fictions — not "legal fictions", but meaningless,

(6). Furthermore, the theory in question runs into self-contradiction in undertaking to soften down the appearance of attributing downright deception to the authors of the Deuteronomic and Levitical legislation by saying that they only meant that what they promulgated was in the *spirit* of the Mosaic law, or was a logical development of the germ which was found in the laws actually given by Moses.[1] This might be conceded to have some weight, if the critics did not with one breath virtually deny what they affirm with the other. For they tell us that Moses gave no laws but the Decalogue, and perhaps not even that. The so-called Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx. 22 — xxiii. 19), called the earliest of the groups of laws, is ascribed to a time after the Jews had become settled in Palestine.[2] If, then, Moses can at the most be held responsible only for the Decalogue, in what sense can the ritual law be said to have been developed out of that? On the contrary, we are repeatedly told that the prophets were constantly enforcing the Decalogue as *over against* the sacrificial rites of their hearers. According to the representations of the critics who

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senseless, useless fictions, not having even the poor merit, which other critics might ascribe to them, of serving the better to deceive the people into the belief that the laws were really Mosaic, but false stories conceived in the purest wantonness for no intelligible purpose whatever. And whether one adopts the "legal fiction" theory or some other, the story of Korah, if a late invention, must have been a gratuitous insult to the descendants of Korah, who had attained an honorable place in the later Jewish Church.

[1] W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament* etc. p. 309.

[2] Wellhausen, *Geschichte,* p. 410.

thus put the two things into opposition one to another, a development of the ritual law out of the Decalogue would seem very much like a development of carbon out of hydrogen.

But we are assured[1] that "in Israel all law was held to be derived from the teaching of Moses." Indeed; but what reason have we for such an assumption? Everything in the Pentateuch, Joshua, and the following books which ascribes the Pentateuchal laws to Moses is declared to be a fiction of the times of Josiah or later. Even the very personality of Moses, we are told, is dim.[2] And certainly it is true that in the prophetic books (the only ones in which the critics have much confidence) Moses is very seldom mentioned at all; and in the few cases in which he is mentioned (except in Daniel and Malachi) he is not spoken of as a lawgiver, but only as a leader (Isa. lxiii. 11, 12, Jer. xv. 1, Mic. vi. 4). This negative evidence of the prophets as regards the Mosaic law is in other relations much insisted on. If now, as we are asked to believe, from the time of Moses till that of Josiah the law of Moses is mentioned only in spurious passages and seems to have been unknown, how comes it that all of a sudden, at the time of the exile or after, it was found necessary to ascribe all legislation to this same Moses?

But the statement that all laws were held to be derived from the teachings of Moses is simply not true. The legislation of David and Solomon and the other kings, even when it related to ceremonial

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[1] W. R. Smith, *ibid.* p. 385.

[2] C. H. Toy, *Judaism and Christianity*, p. 25.

matters, is nowhere said to be derived from Moses. Moreover, if it was so much a matter of course that the Deuteronomic and Levitical codes should be in form ascribed to Moses, what shall be said of Ezekiel, who is alleged to have undertaken to introduce an elaborate ritual which was new for the most part to the Jews of his time, and was the forerunner of the post-exilic Levitical code? He does not ascribe his laws to Moses. So then this grand principle, that all legislation had to be in form attributed to Moses, breaks down in the most conspicuous instance. Is it said that Ezekiel spoke with the authority of a prophet — as one, therefore, who had no need of leaning upon any preceding human authority? Then we may ask, why did not some earlier prophet undertake the business of legislation as well as Ezekiel? Why was it necessary for the Deuteronomic code to be smuggled in by a trick, if a prophet speaking by divine authority might boldly have promulgated it as a new divine revelation? Or if, as some suppose, the author of Deuteronomy was a real prophet, say, Jeremiah, why should he, more than his contemporary Ezekiel, have hidden himself behind the name of Moses, especially when (if the critics are right) Moses as a legislator had been previously as good as unknown? To such questions the critical theory has no satisfactory answer.

(7). The new theory runs into difficulties and inconsistencies in its representations of the prophets and of their testimony concerning the Mosaic law. In the first place, the critics give no adequate explanation of the rise of such a class of men as the prophets who flourished between 800 and 600 B. C.

On their hypothesis of a slow development of religious life and belief — a development which, we are told, preceded and produced nearly or quite all of the writings of the Old Testament — it is difficult to see how the very first authentic utterances of the Jewish religious mind could have been of the elevated sort which is found in the prophetical books. The very scholars who tell us that the Jewish religion could not have produced the Psalms till during or after the captivity admit the genuineness of the prophetical writings, which are saturated with quite as lofty, pure, and fervent a religious spirit as that of the best of the Psalms. One could not well conceive of a more glaring self-contradiction than that which is involved in conceding, on the one hand, the genuineness of the prophetical books, and in contending, on the other, that the Jews could not have developed the sacrificial law and religious poetry till centuries afterwards. It is like making a process of development begin at the end.

But, in the second place, the testimony of the prophets as to the Mosaic legislation is used in a partisan way. It is assumed that, when the prophetical school arose, the people had been living without any religious legislation except perhaps the Decalogue. But the *argumentum e silentio* weighs as heavily against the existence of this law as against that of any other. It is nowhere specifically mentioned by the prophets, although, considering the general tenor of the prophetic utterances, it would seem as if it would have been much more natural for the prophets to refer to that than to the ceremonial law. Obviously what they found it necessary to contend against was moral

obliquity combined with superstitious trust in sacrificial offerings. Against this error they hurled their most vehement denunciations. They had, therefore, no occasion to lay stress on the observance of the ceremonial law; on the contrary, the abuse of the *spirit* of the ritual was so gross that they were tempted into the use of the strongest language in the condemnation of ritual formalism, so that Jeremiah (vii. 22), wishing to emphasize the importance of ethical uprightness as compared with ceremonial observances, goes so far as to make God say, "I spake not unto your fathers nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices."

This language of passionate rhetoric is now seized upon by the critics as if it were intended to be a cool historic statement. But if this negative statement is to be taken so literally, then we should certainly take no less literally the positive statement (Jer. xxxiv. 12—14), that the law concerning the redemption of Hebrew servants was given at the time of the exodus. Moreover, one cannot account for this statement by the assumption that it is a rhetorical paradox, or indeed in any way except by supposing that Jeremiah really believed that he was stating an undeniable fact. It makes no material difference whether he had in mind Ex. xxi. 2 or Deut. xv. 12; for according to the radical critics neither the Book of the Covenant (in which the first of the passages stands) nor the Deuteronomic code was given by Moses. Jeremiah's language, however, much more nearly resembles the passage in Deuteronomy than the other. If he quoted from the Deuteronomic law,

then he certainly represents it as Mosaic. But if he did so, being deceived as everybody else is alleged to have been respecting the fact, and really supposed Deuteronomy to have been written by Moses, then he must have supposed also that *the ceremonial ordinances in the same book were given by Moses;* and then what becomes of the confident inference which the critics derive from Jer. vii. 22 that, according to the prophet, Moses issued *no* laws concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices? The case is not materially altered, if we suppose him to have referred to the passage in Exodus; for the Book of the Covenant (Ex. xx. 24—26, xxiii. 18) also contains commandments concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices. On the "legal fiction" theory of the so-called Mosaic legislation the case is, if anything, still worse. We are asked to believe that Jeremiah, though knowing that these laws were not Mosaic, yet deliberately declares that they were enacted at the time of the exodus. But in either case the instance under consideration presents a good illustration of the one-sidedness of a criticism which eagerly seizes upon one prophetic utterance concerning the Mosaic ordinances as unquestionably and literally true, because it confirms the critical hypothesis, but ignores the other, because it looks the other way.

The fact is that, though the earlier prophets say little or nothing about the law of *Moses,* they say a great deal about the law of *Jehovah,* which the people are accused of having neglected and disobeyed (Isa. v. 24, xxiv. 5, xlii. 24, Jer. xvi. 11, xliv. 10, Ezek. xxii, 26, Hos. iv. 6, etc.). The famous passage in which Jeremiah (xxxi. 31—33) tells of the new cov-

venant which is to be made, when the law of God is to be written on the heart of his people, itself contrasts this with the covenant which was made at the time of the *exodus*. But elsewhere also reference is made to a divine law given at the same time; e.g., Jer. xi. 1—5, xxxii. 20—23, Ezek. xx. 10—13. It is worth noting that in the first of these passages the prophet (verse 4) makes a formal quotation, the original of which seems to be Lev. xxvi. 3, 12, that is, a portion of the Pentateuch assumed by the critical theory to have been promulgated after the time of Jeremiah. Nowhere else can we find in the Pentateuch the condition of obedience to the divine commandments connected with the promise, "Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God."

This last mentioned passage, and still more the one (Jer. xxxiv. 12—14) previously adduced, show that, when the prophet refers to the legislation of the time of the exodus, he does not have in mind merely the law of the two tables. We have in short conclusive proof that a considerable body of laws is assumed by the prophets to have been given *at the time of the exodus*. And since reference is made to groups of laws in which there are directions concerning sacrifices, the inference is inevitable that the prophets did assume that ceremonial laws were enacted at the time of the exodus, that is, by Moses. When now it is urged that the prophets everywhere denounce the practice of offering sacrifices, and that Jeremiah in the passage (vii. 22) above mentioned expressly declares that no ceremonial laws were given by Moses, the answer is simple: These strong expressions are easily explained by the prevalence of the

abuse of sacrificial rites. But what furnishes a demonstrative proof that the prophets cannot have meant to inveigh against all ritual service as such is the fact that *they represent the ideal future state as one in which sacrificial rites are to be observed.* Thus Jeremiah himself (xvii. 26) tells of the good time coming when "they shall come from the cities of Judah and from the places round about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the lowland, and from the mountains, and from the South, bringing burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and oblations, and frankincense, and bringing sacrifices of thanksgiving, unto the house of Jehovah." Still more emphatical to the same effect is Jer. xxxiii. 17—22. So also Isa. xix. 21, xliii. 23, 24, lvi. 7, lxvi. 21—23, Zech. xiv. 16—21, Zeph. iii. 10, Hos. iii. 4, 5. In Hos. ix. 4, 5 it is represented as a chastisement when sacrifices shall not be rendered or accepted. Nowhere do the prophets speak of an ideal future as characterized by the absence of sacrifices, while they repeatedly speak of such a future as characterized by their presence. What right have we, then, when they refer in general terms to the law of Jehovah given at the inauguration of the history of the Jewish people, to assume that they mean only a moral law to the exclusion of a ceremonial one?

This point is all the more forcible, inasmuch as the actual ideal future was to be characterized by precisely this absence of sacrificial rites. If the prophets had been gifted with enough far-sightedness, they would have portrayed the future differently. The fact that they wrote as they did, and that in their highest conceptions of the church of the future it

was to retain sacrifices and oblations, shows conclusively that what they denounce in the sacrifices of their countrymen is not sacrifice as such, but the wicked and superstitious spirit in which the sacrifices are offered. Moreover, since their ideal church is conceived as one in which sacrifices are offered, it is an inevitable inference that they must have regarded the old law of Jehovah as prescribing such sacrifices. No doubt, they laid the greatest stress on the need of moral uprightness, because in that particular they found the greatest lack. But if, when they denounced sacrificial rites, they meant to assert or imply that the divine law already given had nothing to say about them, then it is simply inconceivable that they should have pictured to themselves the more perfect law of the time to come as enjoining them.

(8). What has just been said suggests another difficulty in the radical hypothesis in question: it has no satisfactory explanation of the origin of the sacrificial code. Sacrifices must of course be admitted to have been in fact offered by the Jewish people long before the time of the exile. The prophets in denouncing them could not have been fighting a creation of their own fancy. How, then, are the Levitical sacrifices conceived by the representatives of the extreme critical theory? They must make their choice between two possible views.

(i). The sacrifices may be regarded as purely superstitious rites, neither commanded by God nor pleasing to him. But in this case an institution which God, through the prophets, is alleged to have condemned must be held to be that towards which the religious drift of the nation was more and more tend-

ing. And therefore the development of the Jewish religion, since the evolution of the sacrificial system went on, until after the exile it attained the highest sanction and authority, must have been a development *downwards*. This, however, is squarely in contradiction of the evolutionary conception which underlies the critical doctrine under consideration. The very scholars who regard the sacrificial code as a product of the exilic or post-exilic period argue (though without a shadow of historical evidence) that the Psalms must have been the product of the same or a later time, on the ground that the religious development of the previous centuries was not adequate to their production. But surely one cannot be allowed to assume an upward progress when discussing the Psalter, and a downward progress when discussing the ritual.

(ii). Or the sacrificial rites may be regarded as really commanded or sanctioned by God. But in this case we are bound to have some conception of the meaning and use of the ritual. What was it for? Was it merely a form required for form's sake? Merely a surrender and destruction of property for the sake of the loss suffered? If so, it is no wonder that it led to Pharisaism of the worst sort. Nothing could have been better fitted to develop the spirit of formalism and self-righteousness than to be made to understand that there was something highly meritorious in the performance of sacrificial rites merely as an *opus operatum*. But this is of course an inadmissible theory of the use of the ritual. It must have had a significance. And that it had a significance, even the very prophets themselves imply in the figures which they draw from the ritual service. Sacrifices were

an expression of praise, consecration, and penitence. They had a language adapted to a primitive state of religious development. But if we must thus conceive of their meaning, then what are we to think of a divine plan which begins with nothing but a code of morals, and ends after a thousand years with a system of sacrificial rites? The symbolic language of the offerings could be understood only as they *accompanied* the moral law. They were needed, if at all, from the very beginning of the religious development of the people. To suppose that God at first gave a moral law, and then waited a thousand years before he gave the ritual, requires us to assume that, after denouncing as religious sacrilege the sacrifices which the people had in their own gropings instituted, God at last instituted as a religious duty what was for substance the same thing!

If there was any need of a symbolic language to set forth the need of thanksgiving, consecration, and expiation, it was surely needed at the beginning, rather than near the end, of the Jewish national existence. If the sacrificial rites were a part of the Mosaic legislation, it is quite intelligible that they might have been more or less abused and misunderstood, or loosely observed, and that after the great national misfortune they might have been more carefully performed according to the terms of the ritual law. It is not difficult to understand how an exaggerated notion of the value of punctilious observance of the law may have grown up. But if there was originally no such ritual legislation at all, it is simply inexplicable that it should have been introduced, by any one inspired of God, at the late time assigned to

it by the radical critics. The moral and ceremonial laws belonged together, if the ceremonial had any place at all.

(9). Finally, it may be remarked that it is not to be wondered at that the Graf-Wellhausen theory, after having burdened itself with all these difficulties, has to shoulder also the additional one, that it requires Christians to believe that the most of the Mosaic law was smuggled into currency by bare-faced frauds. The book of Deuteronomy said by the sacred historian to have been "*found*" in the temple by Hilkiah, is affirmed by the critics to have been *composed* at that time, perhaps by Hilkiah, perhaps by Jeremiah, or by some unknown man writing in the prophetical spirit. At any rate, the book purports to come from Moses and (we are asked to believe) was deliberately palmed off upon the king and others as such. The end to be gained is indeed supposed to have been a good one; but the means for the attainment of the end are conceived to have been a cunning deception. Either Hilkiah consciously told a falsehood when he reported that he had found the book of the law; or some one else, the author or an agent of the author, had somehow stealthily got the book hidden in the temple in the anticipation that it would be discovered and be accepted as the work of Moses. Hezekiah's reformation, undertaken without any such Mosaic warrant, had not been very successful; now, therefore, it was determined to supply such a warrant and inflame the zeal of Josiah by means of it. The process was a trick like what would have been accomplished, if Alexander II. of Russia, instead of emancipating the serfs by his own independent act,

had been falsely made to believe that a previously unknown or forgotten ukase of Peter the Great ordering the liberation of the serfs had been discovered in the archives. If such a thing had really happened, and Alexander, in pious horror at the previous non-execution of Peter's edict, had at once put it in force, the serfs would indeed have been freed; but what would be thought of a government and a people in which legislation, good or bad, could be brought about by such means? Now the alleged forgery and fraudulent introduction of Deuteronomy would have been not one whit more excusable than the supposed forgery of a decree of Peter the Great. No palliation of the enormity of the proceeding can succeed in making it anything else than a shameful fraud. It is generally supposed to have come from the prophetical party, if not from some genuine prophet. But the prophets are justly lauded as the preachers of a stern morality; fraud, injustice, and deceit are denounced by them in the most vigorous terms. And yet we are asked to believe that, as the result of their influence, this fraudulent scheme was devised and carried into execution. It is alleged to have accomplished what centuries of direct preaching had failed to accomplish. No amount of talk, uttered as the direct message of Jehovah, had succeeded in checking the prevalence of idolatry and worship on the high places. This one unknown prophet, by the happy device of cheating king, priests, and people into the belief that a hitherto lost work of the great deliverer had come to light, introduced a new era into the religious history of Israel! What would have been thought of his conduct, if the knowledge of it had at that time

leaked out, we cannot tell; for no one but the perpetrator (and perhaps the few who were in the secret and faithfully kept it) ever knew anything about it, until in this present century their crafty trick has been found out by pure critical insight! It is hard to determine which to admire most — the shrewdness of the original fraud, or the shrewdness of the detectives who have at last unearthed it!

The shrewdness appears, however, according to the modern hypothesis, to have been confined to the mysterious author and his coadjutors. If such a code of laws had never before been heard of, it would, we should suppose, have been most natural for everybody to suspect the genuineness of it. A genuine book of Moses, prescribing civil and ceremonial laws for the people, could not have passed into oblivion at once. Tradition must have preserved some account of it, even if the laws had been poorly observed and the written copies of the code had disappeared. On the supposition that such traditional accounts were in existence and that some parts of the law, if not the whole, had been orally handed down, it can easily be understood that, even though in the wicked reign of Manasseh all or nearly all the written copies had perished, the now discovered copy would be recognized as a genuine document. But if such laws had never been heard of, and they were now brought forward for the first time, it is simply incredible that no question of their genuineness should have been raised, and that everybody at once — king, priests, all the civil officials, and even the prophetess Huldah — should have accepted the book as the law of Jehovah given through Moses. Such

simplicity, if it really was the universal characteristic of the people and their rulers, must have exposed them to any number of similar swindles. It would seem as if not merely two, but forty, different codes might have been foisted upon the nation, and that, however irreconcilable with one another, they would have been received with unquestioning submission by all classes of the people. It imposes, however, too strong a draught on one's credulity to ask him to believe that deceptions on such a grand scale were possible. But even if they were possible, the moral enormity of them would not be mitigated by their success. It is certainly not a light thing to ask Christian men to believe that the best men of the Hebrew nation, acting, too, under divine inspiration, could find no better way to further their pious design than to perpetrate such a gigantic forgery and to smuggle it into acceptance and currency by a brazen falsehood!

A similar performance, according to the radical critics, was enacted some two hundred years later, when the greater part of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers was foisted upon the returned exiles as being the genuine original law of Moses, although in fact recently composed by some priest of whom nothing more is known than of the author of Deuteronomy. But he must have been a singularly clever man, if he was able to wheedle such men as Ezra and Nehemiah into believing that the code was genuinely Mosaic. If, however, we suppose that Ezra himself was both the author and the promulgator of the code, then we have the forger and the wholesale deceiver in one person — a supposition which cer-

tainly does not mitigate either the moral or the psychological difficulties of the problem. Whatever the theorists may profess to have discovered, certain it is that Ezra and Nehemiah, if we can trust the author (or authors) of the books bearing their names, either believed or pretended to believe that the laws now issued were really Mosaic. Somebody, if the critical hypothesis is to be accepted, had somehow accomplished the "pious fraud", and the new code was successfully introduced into the number of the sacred books, and destined evermore to hold a front rank therein.

We are here again confronted with the apparently insuperable difficulty of carrying such a scheme successfully through. Ezra must have known, we should suppose, that up to his own time no such laws had been heard of; and how could he have been made to believe that now, after the lapse of a thousand years, genuine laws from Moses' pen had actually been brought to light? Or if he himself and Nehemiah were parties to the fraud, even then is it conceivable that the people in general, including the men of prominence in civil and ecclesiastical life, who had heretofore had no knowledge or tradition of any such code, could quietly and unsuspectingly have received it as of Mosaic origin? It would be scarcely possible to point to any similar instance of deception on such a colossal scale. The case of the Pseudo-Isidore Decretals comes perhaps nearest to it. But it was less audacious and less successful.

Even if, however, we admit the possibility of such a deception being accomplished, the moral character of it is not thereby redeemed. The heinousness of

the thing lies on the surface. The effort to deprecate a severe judgment of it, by reference to the lax conscience of the ancients and of the Orientals in the matter of deception, must be pronounced lame and impotent. No doubt, the Orientals lie more lightly than the Occidentals; no doubt, Abraham deceived Pharaoh, Jacob cheated his brother, Jael was treacherous to Sisera, and David more than once indulged in falsehoods. But for that matter lying is not unknown even among professed Christians in the Western world. There is more self-complacency than satisfactoriness in the apology made for the alleged deceivers and the exploits attributed to them. It is one thing, when a person, actuated by fear, vanity, passion, or selfishness, perpetrates a falsehood; quite another, when a man, consulting for the highest good of a nation and professing to be actuated by the fear of God, seeks to gain his end by a gigantic deception, and that too when there is *no occasion or excuse for it*. For in the case before us, if the object was to introduce a new ecclesiastical legislation or reformation, there were other ways open by which it could have been gained. The king, acting on the advice of prophets or priests, might have introduced it, just as Hezekiah had done; or a prophet, acting under divine direction, might have brought forward a sacrificial code, as Ezekiel did. Should it be said that there was a sanctity attaching to any legislation coming from Moses which could not belong to a new code, it need only be replied that, according to the new hypothesis itself, whether the code freshly introduced should be believed to be Mosaic depended on faith in prophetic authority. Josiah was confirmed in his

impressions about the newly discovered law by the prophetic verdict of Huldah; and the returned exiles accepted the Levitical code on the authority of Ezra, their great ecclesiastical leader. There was so strong a presumption against the genuineness of laws professing to be Mosaic, if they made their first appearance centuries after Moses' death, that a peculiarly weighty authority would be required to certify their genuineness. It would have been easier for a people, believing in the reality of divinely inspired prophets, to accept an absolutely new legislation as coming from God than to believe, on the word of the prophets, that an old lost law of Moses had come to light. There was, therefore, no necessity for the alleged trick of palming off upon the people a new code as an old one.

Such a necessity can be made out to have existed only on the assumption that the people's faith in the inspiration and authority of Moses, though unfounded, was so dominant that, in order to introduce new legislation, it was necessary to take advantage of the popular superstition about Moses. The necessity, in this case, was similar to that which some enlightened critics have found in the history of the Christian Church. No miracles, they say, ever took place, not even the resurrection of Christ; but it was necessary to propagate a *belief* in the resurrection in order to get a start for the Christian religion. This, if the evidence for it were conclusive, might possibly answer, if we were dealing with a purely secular history and the scheming of mere politicians; these have never been overscrupulous in the means for attaining their ends. But if we are dealing with a sacred history, if God

by special inspiration determined the course of Jewish history and legislation, then it is scarcely less than sacrilege to assume that he employed such a disgraceful method of accomplishing his end as the introduction of the Pentateuchal codes is supposed to have been.

It is true, some attempts are made to palliate the seeming shamefulness of the process by which (according to the hypothesis under consideration) the ceremonial code was smuggled into acceptance and application. Thus Prof. W. R. Smith [1] says, "People who have not understood the Old Testament are accustomed to say, with the usual presumption of unhistorical rationalism, that this [introduction of the Levitical code as the Law of Moses] is either literally true or a lie. The reverent and thoughtful student, who knows the complicated difficulties of the problem, will not willingly accept this statement of the question. If we are tied up to make a choice between these two alternatives, it is impossible to deny that all the historical evidence that has come before us points in the direction of the second". But then he goes on to represent that the word "Mosaic" was understood to mean only "Mosaic in principle", and that, inasmuch as "Moses was priest as well as prophet, both priests and prophets referred the origin of their Torah to him". Accordingly, "to reconcile the prophets and the priesthood, to establish conformity between the practice of Israel's worship and the spiritual teachings of the prophets, was to return to the standpoint of Moses and bring back the Torah

[1] *Old Testament* etc., p. 307 sqq.

to its original oneness. Whether this was done by bringing to light a forgotten Mosaic book, or by recasting the traditional and consuetudinary law in accordance with Mosaic principles, is a question purely historical, which does not at all affect the legitimacy of the work".

Now if this means (as it seems to mean) that Moses really promulgated some kind of sacrificial ritual, and that the one enforced by Ezra was nothing but a normal development of that original germ, the strong characterization above made of the post-exilic legislation (as conceived by the radical critics) should be much modified. But all the preceding part of Professor Smith's book has been an elaborate attempt to prove that Moses gave *no* laws except the Decalogue; only a few pages before the passages above quoted the author announces as his conclusion, "What is quite certain is that, according to the prophets, the Torah of Moses did not embrace a law of ritual. Worship by sacrifice, and all that belongs to it, is no part of the divine Torah to Israel" (p. 298). Now, however, only thirteen pages later, we are told, as a means of relieving Ezra and his associates of the grave charge of fraud, that by introducing the Levitical code they did nothing but "to return to the standpoint of Moses and bring back the Torah to its original oneness". Now this may be "reverent and thoughtful", but to the plain common sense of ordinary men it cannot seem to be less than a flat self-contradiction into which the author has plunged in his desperate effort to overcome the "complicated difficulties" of his own theory. It certainly leaves us still in the predicament into which "unhistorical ra-

tionalism" puts us, viz., that of being obliged to decide whether Ezra's representations were "literally true or a lie". And the main drift of his book, according to his own confession, certainly compels us, if we accept his conclusions, to adopt the second part of the alternative. Where the charge of "unhistorical rationalism" most properly lies, may be left for the judicious to decide.

These are some of the serious difficulties which a merely cursory glance at the theory of the advanced critics forces upon one's notice. Our purpose does not devolve upon us the task of entering on a minute consideration of the theory. This work has been done by others, who have followed up the arguments in detail, and have exposed the numerous arbitrary hypotheses, self-contradictions, illogical inferences, and other fallacies, of the works of those who are undertaking to familiarize the Christian public with their new light respecting the origin of the Old Testament. What is now to be insisted on is that a hypothesis which undertakes to supplant the traditional opinion on the ground of certain difficulties which beset the latter cannot be regarded as established so long as it creates, to say the least, as great difficulties as those which it removes. And chief among these difficulties, especially from a Christian point of view, is the fact that the new hypothesis asks us to believe that the Old Testament is to a very large extent made up of books that were smuggled into the collection by artifice and fraud, of books deliberately forged and finding their way into the Canon by virtue of a false impression as to their authorship, and of books so largely interpolated and changed by partisan writers

that the original meaning and intent is often buried up in the mass of unauthentic and misleading additions.

And this, without any exaggeration, is the outcome of the speculations of that particular critical school which to-day professes to be the only truly scientific one. The Pentateuch and Joshua are regarded as almost wholly made up of myth, legend, and fiction, and very largely of forged productions brought into currency by fraud. Only a few scraps of trustworthy traditions are thought to be discoverable. In Judges, Samuel, and Kings is found more historical matter — particularly those parts which favor the critical theory; but these books are all supposed to be so largely "worked over" by later writers for partisan purposes that as a whole they cannot be relied on. As to the books of Chronicles, though they contain some truth, the history is so thoroughly soaked with the priestliness of the author that they are practically of no value. Ruth and Esther are interesting stories, with no ascertainable foundation in fact. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah are more trustworthy, but in representing the ceremonial law introduced by these men as Mosaic they have to be corrected according to the critical hypothesis. The poetical and prophetical books also are regarded with considerable respect. But the Psalms, contrary to previous views, are mostly or altogether relegated to a late post-exilic period. This is done without the slightest historical evidence, in opposition, indeed, to all the historical evidence attainable, particularly to the superscriptions in the Septuagint, which takes us back to a period almost contemporaneous with that in which the Psalms are supposed to have been com-

posed; so that here too we are asked to believe in a very extensive falsification of history, and, moreover, a falsification which must in a very large degree have been consciously and deliberately perpetrated. The prophetical books, with few exceptions, are left comparatively undisturbed by the majority even of the advanced critics; but some scholars, especially in France, have reached the conclusion that these books too are all post-exilic. How soon this hypothesis will be trumpeted as a "result" of the higher criticism cannot yet be said.

Such, in general terms, is the Old Testament as it is pictured to us by the radical critics of the present day. And whatever else may be said about this representation, it must be said of it that it does not agree with the view evidently entertained by Christ and his immediate disciples. Books known to have such an origin and such a character as the radical critics ascribe to a large part of the Old Testament could not have been spoken of with such reverence as Christ always expressed towards those Scriptures. It is true that he spoke in general terms; but this only makes his utterances all the more significant. If he had particularly quoted and sanctioned only certain portions of the Old Testament, it might have been an open question whether he did not mean implicitly to withold his sanction from the others. But he spoke of the whole collection in such a way as to leave no doubt that he conceived it to be a collection of the oracles of God, a book to be diligently studied as a source of religious instruction and guidance. It is impossible that he should have so

conceived of a book in the composition of which a large part was played by forgers and deceivers.

One who entertains such a view of the Old Testament cannot save his respect for the authority of Christ by saying that Christ came as a religious teacher rather than as a critical scholar, and that it was not essential to the purposes of his mission to reveal, or even to know, the real process by which the Old Testament came into existence. No doubt, his primary mission was a spiritual one. But he announced it as an important part of his work to fulfil the Hebrew Scriptures. He undertook to expound those writings. He appealed to them as of divine origin and as a treasure-house of religious enlightenment and edification. A book which thus lay at the very foundation of his religious work it surely behooved him to *know* about. And if the book largely originated in the brain of forgers, if it is in great part conscious fiction, and if writings of this character were foisted into the Canon by means of fraudulent representations, then it cannot be said that it was of no consequence for him to know anything about this discreditable manner in which the Old Testament came to be. Indeed the advanced critic who undertakes to say that it was of no consequence for Christ, even if he knew about the real origin of the Old Testament, to make any disclosures about it, stultifies himself when he also undertakes to set forth the great usefulness of modern Biblical criticism. It is proclaimed to be of immense importance that the traditional notions concerning the Old Testament should be rectified. But if it is of so much impor-

tance now, why not of equal, if not even greater, importance at the beginning of the Christian era?

The Christian public has so often been told, in a magisterial and even intimidating way, that it is entirely unwarrantable to adduce the authority of Christ against any result which is supposed to have been reached by critical research, that it requires some courage to intimate that perhaps after all he was as well qualified to come to a correct conclusion about the origin and value of the Old Testament as Julius Wellhausen or Abraham Kuenen. And though it is not to be supposed that he devoted much, if any, time to the discussion of questions of Biblical criticism, it does not follow that he did not have the ability to do so, had he found occasion for it. And that he had occasion to know about the history and character of the Old Testament, is implied in his constant reference to it as an authoritative book. We are then logically driven to ask whether he was unable to learn the main facts which are supposed to have been recently brought to light. In other words, was he decidedly inferior in intellectual acumen to the Biblical scholars of the present day? On the contrary, a genuine and reverent faith in Christ as the final and perfect Revealer of the divine will and purposes to men cannot fail to be conjoined with a conception of him as having a mind of exceptional clearness and force. He had the Old Testament before him. Manifestly he was well acquainted with it. He had substantially all the means of forming a judgment concerning critical questions which are enjoyed today. If the prophets were ignorant of any Mosaic law of ritual, and even declared that there was none, Jesus

must have been able to learn what they taught. If the historical books everywhere imply the non-existence of the ritual law, Jesus was competent — possibly as competent as Robertson Smith — to discover the implication. In short, there is scarcely a problem raised by Biblical critics respecting the Old Testament which we must not suppose that Jesus was as able to consider and to settle as any modern scholar.

It is, therefore, a very ugly dilemma into which one places himself who accepts the Wellhausen theory, and at the same time endeavors to retain his Christian faith. Either Christ knew all about the real origin of the Old Testament, or he did not. If he did, then he made himself a party to the deceptions which had, according to the theory in question, been practised on the Jewish people. He represented that to be the word of God which, we are assured, was to a great extent a cunningly devised fable. But if, knowing the facts to be what modern criticism professes to have proved them to be, he kept his knowledge to himself, and even made the impression that he had a totally different conception of the sacred Scriptures from that which his critical knowledge must have given him, then he was guilty of a dishonest procedure which makes him unworthy of our confidence, and undermines all ground for our Christian faith.

If, on the other hand, Christ was ignorant of the real character and origin of the Hebrew Scriptures, then his honesty is saved, but at the expense of his competency to do the work which he assumed. He always spoke as one having authority. He claimed the most exalted prerogatives. He announced himself to

be the Light of the world. He called himself the Son of God and represented himself to be the final revelation of God to men. But if in an important part of his religious teaching he was laboring under a serious error — an error which he was unable to avoid — the natural inference will be that one who can be so little depended on as regards the past history of God's revelation can be no better depended on when he speaks of the future. If Christ were with us now, and were confronted by the critics who profess to have discovered how much mistaken he was in regard to the Old Testament, he might well address to them (though with a different implication) the question which he put to Nicodemus, "If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?" (John iii. 12). In short, it is difficult to see by what warrant Christ's testimony concerning the books of the Old Covenant can be freely rejected, and any genuine confidence can be left in the infallibility of his utterances concerning the future life and the spiritual world.

What has been said does not apply to those analyses of the Old Testament which assume the substantially historical character of it. The critical partition of the Pentateuch and Joshua among a number of different writers does not necessarily require us to assume that the whole course of Old Testament history is falsely given by the books as they stand. One can believe that Moses gave the law, at least in its main features, without assuming that Moses himself wrote it all down. The critical partition of the books is indeed carried out to a degree of minuteness which of itself is suspicious. One can hardly restrain

the doubt whether it is possible by mere critical acumen to dissect so ancient a work into its constituent parts, especially when the dissection is carried so far that single verses, clauses, and even words, are dissevered from their connection, and a redactor has to be postulated as responsible for phenomena that cannot otherwise be accounted for. Still a plausible case can be made out for much of the critical process. And so long as the course of Jewish and primeval history was left by it substantially untouched, so that the only result was the assumption that the Pentateuchal laws and history were largely not written down by Moses, but by subsequent narrators who committed the Mosaic legislation and traditions to paper, the critical partition, whether regarded as conclusively made out or not, was a comparatively harmless thing.

But the case is different when the result of the critical analysis is to introduce a revolution in our conception of Jewish history, and to make a large part of the Biblical books forgeries and fictions which gained the reputation of sacredness and divine authority by fraudulent tricks. And yet, no doubt, much of the fascination of the hypothesis of the more radical critics is derived from just this fact, that it does seek to revolutionize the current view of the Old Testament and of Jewish history. So long as there is little more in the critical analysis than a display of scholarly acumen, it cannot be expected that any permanent interest will be felt in the process. But when it promises to involve striking results in our general view of the Old Testament Scriptures, why, then there is something exciting in it; it falls in with the

propensity of the age to welcome any departure from the old ways of doing and thinking; there is a touch of the heroic in it which wins admiration. All this, however, does not prove it to be true, and with the more sober-minded is of itself a ground of distrust.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

1. It may be anticipated that, to the conclusions reached in the foregoing discussion, some will object that, if accepted, they impose an unwarrantable fetter upon criticism. Must not the critic, it may be asked, be perfectly free to come to any result which the discovered facts require? And is it not illegitimate to try to control scientific research by setting up against it any personal authority whatever, even that of Christ? Must it not be assumed that no *fact* or *truth* discovered by scientific research *can* be overthrown even by the Teacher who came to bear witness to the truth?

Now let all this be heartily conceded; and let it be emphatically insisted on that it is foolish and wicked in any one to dispute established facts, or wilfully to ignore them. That is, however, not the real issue before us. When a scholar professes to have made important discoveries, there are two points to be considered: first, whether the alleged facts are *really* facts; secondly, if this is conceded, whether the

inferences drawn from the facts are necessary or legitimate. And even though from *some* facts a certain inference might be legitimate, it must be considered whether the inference can be harmonized with *other* facts equally well established. In secular science a theory is never regarded as demonstrated unless it accords with *all* known facts. Even though nearly all may seem to justify it, yet if even a single indisputable fact is irreconcilable with the theory, then the theory must be abandoned or at least modified. The Ptolemaic theory of the heavenly bodies seemed to be borne out by all the observed phenomena; but as soon as the single fact of the phases of the planet Venus was discovered, the old theory was seen to be incorrect. When in any case the induction of facts is incomplete, the inferences, or general principles, derived from them must be regarded as hypothetical and provisional.

It is obvious, in view of these admitted principles, that many of the so-called "results" of modern Biblical criticism are very largely nothing but hypotheses. They are in harmony with certain facts, but are inconsistent with other facts. No one can be called on to give assent to them as being themselves *facts* which it is idle to dispute. They are nothing but inferences, hypotheses, with which by no means all the recognized facts have yet been reconciled. In many cases doubtless we may have to hesitate as between two opposing theories. Certain facts may be reconcilable with either of them; some facts favor the one, others the other. Though one or the other of the two theories must be true, the data are insufficient for determining absolutely on which side the truth lies. Take, for

instance, the question whether the coincidences in the three Synoptic Gospels indicate an earlier written history from which the common features were derived. Either they do, or they do not; but whichever view one may take, it can at the best be called only hypothetical, since the admitted phenomena are largely indecisive, and the facts which would suffice to settle the question are not ascertainable. Or let us consider the critical question, whether the apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel. We have here, as facts, the style and contents of the book, noticeably different from those of the other Gospels; the virtual, if not formal, claim of the book to have been written by John; the absence of any external attestation of its genuineness up to about the second quarter, or (as some affirm) up to the middle, of the second century; the uniform tradition of the Church that John was the author. Now those who defend, and those who contest, the Johannean authorship undertake to bring their theory into accord with all the various facts concerning the book. Both theories cannot be true; but so long as both are advocated, each must be regarded as a hypothesis rather than as an established fact.

This, however, does not mean that the two hypotheses are equally worthy of credit. And especially should we bear in mind that the *presumption* is on the side of the *traditional view*. If John has always been reputed to be the author of the book, he must be regarded as the author, unless this opinion is clearly *proved untenable by undeniable facts*. Unless this principle is allowed, all literary and political history becomes a jumble of uncertainties. How do

we know that John Bunyan wrote the Pilgrim's Progress? or that Quintilian wrote the Institutes of Oratory? For substance the evidence is nothing but a uniform tradition. The same may be affirmed in general of both ancient and modern literature. The authorship and date are chiefly matters of tradition. The burden of proof rests heavily on any one who would reject the traditional view; and only in exceptional cases is it possible for scholars to overthrow it by a critical inspection of the works themselves. And if in the attempt to overthrow the current opinion one fails to do justice to admitted facts, or burdens his own theory with difficulties which did not beset the older one, it is preposterous to claim for the new theory that it is the true one and must supplant the other.

This principle should be kept in mind when the demand is made that the modern radical hypothesis concerning the Old Testament shall be accepted as demonstrated. It is undoubtedly favored by some facts, but it is far from being reconcilable with all the facts. It not only has to discard the testimony of tradition, but it has to go counter to the uniform testimony of the Bible itself, and in doing so is forced to assume a large number of interpolations, falsifications, and reconstructions in the Biblical books. Instead of satisfying all the facts, it seeks to put facts out of the way; and, instead of removing all difficulties, it exposes itself to very formidable ones which do not beset the view which it aims to supplant. It is, therefore, a violation of all sound principles of criticism, when this hypothesis is heralded as a truth which can claim the assent of all right-minded men. If any

further proof of this were required, it would be found in the fact that thirty years ago, long after the critical partition of the Pentateuch had been made, and in full view of all ascertainable facts bearing on the question, the theory of the post-exilic origin of the Levitical law was ridiculed by nearly all Biblical scholars of every stripe as a critical monstrosity. Surely that which was then regarded as the vagary of an extremist cannot now have become all of a sudden an incontestable certainty.

But, we are sometimes told, the opinion of scholars is now so nearly unanimous in favor of the hypothesis in question that it has practically the character of an established fact. To this it need only be replied that, even if the allegation were true, this holding up *in terrorem* of the agreement of scholars could not nullify the serious difficulties under which the hypothesis labors. But the allegation is not true. He who talks as if all the scholars of Germany accept the theory of the post-exilic origin of the Pentateuch or even of the Levitical law simply shows his ignorance of facts. Whatever may be true of the critical partition of the book, this revolutionary reconstruction of Old Testament history and legislation is rejected by a large proportion of modern German scholars. Delitzsch, Dillmann, Riehm, Köhler, Bredenkamp, Strack, and other men of a similar stamp, are not to be put into the same category with Wellhausen, Kuenen, Reuss, and Budde.

When, therefore, one adduces the authority of Christ in opposition to the Wellhausen theory, he is not attempting to overthrow an established fact by a mere dictum. The question before us is not whether

facts shall be admitted, but whether certain *theories* are *required* by the facts, or even duly recognize *all* the facts. And very prominent among the facts is the testimony of Christ himself on the controverted point. This testimony is one — and certainly a very important one — among many *facts* which militate against the *inferences* which are drawn from *other* facts; shall it not be admitted in evidence?

Still it may be contended that, though Christ's testimony may be admitted for what it is worth, yet it will not do to set it up on critical matters as decisive against the results which critical research may reach. Even if his testimony is rightly apprehended, still (the critic may say) there is the possibility that he was so limited in his knowledge that what he said cannot counterbalance the consentient testimony of the evidences on the other side. But, in the first place, Christ's testimony does not stand alone, but is one among many. And, in the second place, whetever may be true of certain subordinate critical questions, there are *some* matters on which his authority must be taken as conclusive, or else our faith in him as a Teacher and Redeemer is misplaced. Criticism may, if it will, try to undermine all that Christ said, and prove him to have been an ignoramus or a deceiver. But this would not be Christian criticism. Any one is at liberty to go this extreme; but he cannot do so *as a Christian.*

Just on what points Christ's testimony must be unconditionally accepted, even though opposed to what are called the "results" of criticism, is a matter for Christian common sense to determine. The preceding chapters of this work constitute an attempt to point

out some of the limits beyond which the theories of critics can no longer rightly ask to be accepted by Christians. The effort has been made to indicate in a general way some of the tendencies and alleged discoveries of Biblical criticism which directly or indirectly involve a rejection of faith in Christ. It has been assumed that in genuine Christians this faith is something radical — something that is incapable of being overturned by every wind of doctrine or by every plausible objection which may be raised. It has been assumed that Christian faith involves an experience of divine grace and an apprehension of divine truth so well grounded that they cannot be proved spurious and false. It has been assumed that in entering upon a critical study of the Scriptures a Christian begins with the fundamental conviction that Christianity is impregnable. One who enters upon the critical examination in a different spirit — one who does it with a perfect readiness to surrender his Christian faith as soon as anything turns up which seems seriously to conflict with it — such a one can hardly be called a true Christian at all. If his faith is not a deep-seated thing, but only like a coat which can be put on or off according as the wind blows, it is not of the genuine kind. If it is genuine, it constitutes a *prepossession*, which cannot but modify the inferences that one draws from the truths which critical research brings to light. It is a simple fact of history that the same things which to to some are a clear proof of the falseness of Christianity are not at all such to others. And the reason is simply that to the latter the foundations of Christianity are so firm that they cannot be shaken. If any

fact seems to be inconsistent with it, the true Christian can only say that it must be a mere seeming, since to abandon his faith would require him to come into conflict with evidences that are much more decisive *for* the Christian faith than the others can be *against* it.

In a very important sense, therefore, one's freedom is limited by the mere fact of his being a Christian. He is not free, as a Christian, to deny or blaspheme his Lord; he is not free to declare other religions superior or equal to Christianity; he is not free to propound doctrines or draw inferences which are directly or implicitly at war with the fundamental truths of Christianity. As a Christian critic, he is not free to follow the skeptic in his anti-Christian conclusions. But within the limits of the Christian faith there is a wide range of research; and here Christians have perfect freedom. Even though some may indulge in errors or vagaries, these will soon be corrected or forgotten. If any seem to come to unwarrantable conclusions, it only remains for others to refute them. Free discussion and investigation will in the long run be the best corrective of erroneous or erratic notions.

2. What is now called "higher criticism" is nothing new except in name. This of course is, or should be, a truism; and yet an impression seems widely to prevail (and has to some extent been fostered by the critics themselves), that the science of higher criticism is a decidedly modern thing, a recent invention, as it were. No mistake could be greater. It is true that the modern critic has some facilities for his work which are superior to those formerly enjoyed; and at any rate each generation has the advantage of

being able to make use of the labors of the preceding ones. But, after all, the principal facts on the basis of which modern critical theories are put forth have been patent to all the world from the first century of our era. And there have always been higher critics. The early Christians, in deciding what writings to accept as of canonical authority, were practising the higher criticism. Whoever have dealt with the topics appropriate to what are called Introductions to the Bible have been laborers in the same field. The value of one's critical judgment depends in general on the extent of one's knowledge of the topics which the criticism has to deal with. But there is always the important qualification, that the judgment may be biased by a predisposition to arrive at a certain result; so that often an unlearned man, pious, honest, and clear-headed, will come to a more correct conclusion than the greatest scholar who is possessed with a passion for proving a startling proposition. But of whatever sort the critics may be, candid or prejudiced, learned or unlearned, they have never been wanting.

3. There is also a widespread, though very erroneous, impression, that higher criticism is identical with destructive criticism. And this impression too is not seldom fostered by some of the critics themselves. Whoever sets up criticism against "traditionalism" gives encouragement to this false notion. It creates the impression that a man who follows traditional views cannot be critical. But a man may use critical methods in defending, as well as in attacking, traditional opinions. And there may be a lack of candor in either case. It is quite unwarrantable

for either class to make sweeping charges of uncriticalness against the other. It may be that in many cases mere mental inertia leads men to adhere to traditional views; but it is quite as possible that in other cases an itching for novelty leads men to adopt new doctrines. Whoever seek for facts and endeavor to deduce from the facts legitimate conclusions are critics, even though their conclusions may be ever so divergent from one another.

4. There is danger of exaggerating the results of modern Biblical criticism. While every acquisition of new information, and every improvement in the conception of the Bible and of Biblical truths, should be welcomed, it can hardly be expected that any radically new or revolutionary views can gain general currency. We sometimes read utterances which are fitted to make the impression that a new era has been introduced by modern criticism, that the Christian world is in a tumult of agitation over it, but that the traditional notions concerning the Bible are bound to be swept away by the results of the higher criticism. Books are written to familiarize the Christian public with what has been accomplished by modern research respecting the Scriptures. It would be hardly too much to say that something like intimidation is sometimes practised towards those who venture to doubt whether all these things are true. It is represented as a mark of bigotry to refuse to accept implicitly what the more radical critics are said to have made certain respecting the books of the Bible. Thousands of men are thus persuaded that views are scientifically established which after all are nothing but more or less plausible hypotheses; and

they avow their acceptance of them, not because they understand the reasons for them, but because they are afraid of seeming to be behind the times.

What, then, has in point of fact been accomplished by modern Biblical criticism? In the exegesis of the Scriptures and in the criticism of the text much progress has been made; in what is distinctively called the higher criticism, comparatively little that can be called anything more than plausible conjecture. It may be said of very much of it that what is true in it is not new, and what is new is not true. As to the Old Testament, the chief matter about which one hears is the analysis of the Pentateuch and the inferences derived from it. But all the so-called "results" which are of any especial consequence are still matters of dispute. No doubt, it has been made very probable that the Pentateuch in its present form was not all written by Moses; but that none of it, or almost none of it, was written by him has not been, and never can be, proved. Indications have been found that Genesis is made up of two or three different documents; but whether, in case the book is such a compilation, Moses or some one else was the compiler, a mere critical examination of the book cannot determine; opinions still differ. As to the rest of the Pentateuch, where the evidences of distinct documents are less forcible, it is not improbable that the critical partition has some foundation in fact; but even this, though widely held, is not conclusively proved, and is sturdily denied by many. Still farther from being established is the hypothesis of the late origin and the fraudulent introduction of the Pentateuchal history and legislation. It is little less than

a game of bluff, when the Christian public is called upon to surrender all opinions inconsistent with those advanced by the radical critics of the school of Vatke and Wellhausen.

And what else has been established that was not known before? It has sometimes been paraded as an important result of the higher criticism, that we do not know who wrote such books as Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Job, etc. But the books themselves do not name any one as author. It requires no great critical acuteness to discover this fact. And as to the traditional reports concerning the authorship of these books, we can only say that they may be incorrect, and, on the other hand, that they may have some foundation. In either case little depends on the settlement of the question. For so far as the historical books are concerned, even though they may have been written or put into their final form at a late period, yet there is repeated reference in them to annals that were written at or near the time of the events narrated; and there is a strong presumption that in other cases also the narratives are founded on earlier written records.[1] As to the date of the authorship of Job and of the Psalms, we have speculations in abundance, but no assured results. The superscriptions of the Psalms may legitimately be challenged; their correctness in many cases is questionable; but their general incorrectness has not been, and cannot be, proved. The arguments of those who endeavor to make the Psalms all exilic or post-exilic may almost be characterized as criticism gone mad.

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[1] See Girdlestone, *Foundations of the Bible*, ch. viii.

Much is said about the date of Isa. xl.—lxvi. The assignment of this group of prophecies to the period of the exile is often represented as one of the greatest triumphs of Biblical criticism. The main argument for such a judgment is that the author not only writes about the exilic state, but writes as if that state were present. There is no analogy for so long-continued a discourse in which the prophet seems to be transported from the present into the future. This fact, and the mention of Cyrus by name, have great weight with many who do not disbelieve in a prophetic power to foresee the future. With others of course the decisive consideration is the assumed impossibility of such a supernatural foresight as is implied if Isaiah was the author. On the other hand, however, not to mention the uniform opinion of antiquity in favor of the Isaian authorship, it is to be considered that a large part of the prophecy in question is as appropriate to Isaiah's time as to that of the exile; that the same arguments which are urged for detaching chs. xl.—lxvi. from the preceding prophecies require us also to question many portions of the earlier chapters; and that the linguistic argument in favor of a difference of authorship has, by the confession of almost all critics, broken down. At the best, then, though undoubtedly the great majority of prominent Old Testament scholars favor the theory of a Deutero-Isaiah, it can only be said that the hypothesis is supported by certain forcible considerations. But the utter absence of any historical evidence of the existence and activity of any prophet in the exilic period to whom the chapters in question can be ascribed, and the total lack of any ancient testimony in

favor of the theory of a dual authorship, compel us, when taken in connection with the indecisiveness of the critical arguments, to hold that, however plausible the hypothesis of a Deutero-Isaiah may be, it is not established; and there is no certainty that a few more turns of the critical wheel will not bring back the old opinion into general acceptance.

The similar critical partition of the book of Zechariah is less harped on and is more contested. That chs. ix.—xiv. were written by a different author from that of chs. i.—viii. has been very widely maintained, but the integrity of the book has been very stoutly defended; and it does not tend to strengthen one's confidence in the critical insight of the dissectors, when we find that some of them refer the latter part of the book to a period considerably later than that of Zechariah, while others refer it to a period long previous to that of the prophet. At all events the hypothesis must be content to remain a hypothesis; it is not a "result" of criticism that the integrity of the book is disproved.

The same may be said of the greater part of what modern critics have undertaken to prove respecting other Old Testament books. That Ecclesiastes was not written by Solomon, but by some one who assumed his name, is one of the critical propositions which is generally accepted. It has also been made probable that various books of the Old Testament (such as Samuel and Proverbs) are composite works. Great efforts have been made to show that there are discrepancies and errors in the historical books, and especially to show that the books of Chronicles are untrustworthy. Undoubtedly it has been made prob-

able that minor errors exist in these and other books. But it has not been proved that any of them in their main purport are unhistorical. Many learned and valuable investigations have been made with regard to various historical and linguistic questions; the relation of the Old Testament to the recently discovered records of Egypt and Assyria furnishes a most interesting department of study. But nothing has been brought to light which works any radical change in the general view of the historical value of the Hebrew records.

The conclusion, then, must be that, while the work of the higher criticism has been important and useful, it has not to any material extent succeeded in revolutionizing the conception of the Old Testament which has previously been entertained. And though in some subordinate particulars the ancient notions have been modified, on the other hand the progress of historical and archaeological research has established the truthfulness of many sections of the Old Testament which formerly were pronounced by skeptical critics to be incredible.

If we turn to the New Testament, the results of criticism in modifying the traditional views respecting it are, if anything, still less marked. There has been much minute examination of the several parts, and comparison of them with one another. Attention has been called to many real or apparent discrepancies and errors. Plausible speculations have been made as to the origin of the Synoptic Gospels and their relation to each other; but no conclusion has been reached. The authenticity of Acts has been vigorously assailed, and as vigorously defended. Many of

the Pauline Epistles have been pronounced by some critics to be spurious; but equally able critics maintain their genuineness, and the general opinion of Christendom undoubtedly remains what it always has been. The old doubts about Second Peter have been revived and fortified by elaborate critical research; a formidable assault has been made on the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel; and various speculations concerning the authorship and composition of the Apocalypse have been ventilated. But on none of these points can the traditional opinion be regarded as overthrown. In fact, the more recent New Testament criticism has accomplished more by way of justifying the previous belief in the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament books than in the opposite direction. Too much praise cannot be given to those who have followed step by step the subtle arguments of skeptics (e. g. Lightfoot *versus* the author of *Supernatural Religion*) or of rationalistic Christians, and have shown more clearly than ever before how impregnable the historical foundation of our faith is.

In general, as regards both the Testaments, there has been without doubt, as compared with one or two centuries ago, a considerable modification of the theory of the inspiration and the strict inerrancy of the Bible. The human element in the composition and contents of the several books is more generally recognized and emphasized. This change of opinion, however, has been long going on, and cannot be called one of the trophies of the more recent critical researches.

5. It follows from the foregoing that it is well not to make premature concessions to critical hypoth-

eses and conjectures. No doubt, Christians have often been guilty of the opposite fault, especially when they condemned the propositions of naturalists on the ground of their inconsistency with the Bible. The astronomical and geological doctrines against which believers in the Bible protested were wrought out, on the basis of observed facts, by experts. The subjects had no immediate relation to the main contents and general purpose of the Biblical revelation. It was proper enough to withhold assent from the new doctrines so long as they were only conjectures and speculations; but when they became, in the eyes of all scientists, established truths, opposition should have ceased. But at present the questions on which differences exist are, so to speak, intra-Biblical questions. The new theories are propounded by Biblical scholars, but they are also contested by Biblical scholars, — in either case on critical grounds. They are not established; until they are established, it is premature to begin to recast our whole conception of the Bible in order to adjust it to them.

For whoever makes even a provisional or conditional concession to undemonstrated critical theories, whoever talks or writes as if perhaps or probably they may turn out to be well founded, and begins to speculate how his faith can be accommodated to them, is lending them a support to which they are not entitled. If, as soon as a scholar, or a group of scholars, makes an assault on a position heretofore supposed to be impregnable, Christians begin at once to talk as if the old view must probably or certainly be surrendered, they pursue a course which is closely akin to cowardice, if not to treason. It is as if the

commander of a fort should begin to open his gates as soon as an attack is made and before the size of the attacking force is known. It is no uncommon thing to find good Christians speaking as if only the first four of the Pauline Epistles could be depended on as coming from Paul himself. Not that they are convinced that the others are spurious. Very probably they have never read any of the arguments of the skeptical critics, nor any of the replies to those arguments. But they have heard that the nine smaller Epistles have been suspected, and at once they begin to consider how much would be lost, if the suspicion should prove to be well grounded. They say to themselves, "Well, after all, the first four Epistles are left; and they contain all the essential truths that are found in the others. These at least are undisputed." Others take a somewhat different course, and say, "Well, even if the nine are spurious, they contain much excellent matter. They are Pauline in spirit, and it is of no great account whether Paul himself wrote them or not."

But what is to be done, now that certain critics deny the genuineness of *all* the Pauline Epistles? It can no longer be said that the first four are undisputed. This extreme form of destructive criticism is, it is true, not yet very wide-spread; but it is in some respects more logical than the Tübingen theory. The simple fact is that all the thirteen Epistles have been until this century practically undisputed. They all alike purport to be, and have from the first been supposed to be, genuine writings of Paul. If they all agree so well with one another that they might well have been written by the same man, then there

is no ground for singling out some as genuine and rejecting the others. If they do not so agree, still there is no determining *which* are Pauline, and which are not, since the genuineness of all is historically equally well attested. If Baur chooses to pitch upon Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians as indisputably genuine, and to deny the genuineness of the others because of their inconsistency with these four, another man would be equally justifiable in saying that Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians are indisputable, and in rejecting all the others as being not in harmony with these.

It would not be strange, therefore, if in these days, when anything new is eagerly caught up, this extreme "result" of criticism, which pronounces all the Pauline Epistles spurious, should obtain a wide currency among Biblical critics. And what then? If the same easy, accommodating spirit is shown towards it as towards the other one, then the Christian who looks around to see what he can cling to as undisputed may discover that he has nothing. All the Gospels, the Acts, all the Epistles, and the Apocalypse have been disputed more or less; and if we are to be governed by the principle of firmly trusting nothing but what is universally accepted, our faith is already left without any sure foundation at all. Is it not more rational, as well as more courageous, not to make a surrender before we are conquered?

A similar line of remark is appropriate respecting the more recent radical reconstruction of the Old Testament. It is altogether too early to begin to adjust ourselves to it. It is not established; and any attempt to harmonize it with our Christian faith is

uncalled for and premature. There is no more occasion for trying to find a place in our Christian faith for this extreme theory of the history of the Old Testament than there was fifty years ago for doing the same with the Tübingen theory. The two cases are closely analogous. In both a theory of development lies at the basis. In both there is an avowed or latent doubt of the supernatural. In both, an exaggeration of the real or supposed antitheses of religious parties. In both, the assumption of the controlling influence of partisanship in the composition of the sacred books. In both, a free use of arbitrary conjecture as to the date and authorship of books. In both, the ascription of genuineness or authenticity to some books (the prophetic books in the Old Testament, the first four Pauline Epistles and the Apocalypse in the New) and using them as a means of discrediting the greater part of the others. In both, the distorting of facts for the sake of the theory, and the creation of greater difficulties than those that are removed.

Now when the Tübingen theory was propounded, and acquired for a time a wide currency, there was precisely as much occasion for Christians to bestir themselves to reconcile their faith with the theory as there now is for their hastening to see how they can find room for the Kuenen-Wellhausen hypothesis. But, instead of doing that, Christian scholars then went to work and overthrew the theory, and saved themselves the trouble and self-mystification which would have been involved in adjusting themselves to it. They saw that, whether so intended or not, the theory was really an assault on the foundations of

Christianity; and they did not see any occasion for sending out a flag of truce in order to learn what terms could be made with the enemy, but they simply beat him off with the same weapons with which the assault was made, and held their ground. There is every reason why the same course should be taken now.

But it may be said that the Wellhausen theory is adopted by many excellent Christian men, and that it is therefore rash and unwarranted to pronounce it unchristian either in its professions or in its tendencies. Now without doubt good Christians and scholarly Christians have adopted it, and it is not at all necessary to impugn the sincerity of their Christian faith. But no heresy or fanaticism in Christendom has ever failed to secure adherents among good Christians. And any theory respecting the Bible, if propounded by professed Christians, and advocated with ingenuity, can always reckon on receiving the assent of many sincere believers. But for all that the theory may be in its roots and tendencies essentially anti-Christian. That tendency may be seen by many who have not learning or acumen enough to refute the arguments by which the theory is supported; and in that case their part is to hold on to their old faith, and wait for experts to meet the new hypothesis on its own ground. The Tübingen theory could also claim that it was advocated and adopted by professedly Christian men; and even the extravagant outcome of that theory, which has gone so far as to make all the Pauline Epistles and all the New Testament books spurious and in great part untrustworthy, is put forth by teachers of Christian theology (Loman, Steck, and others). But it is none

the less a theory which directly tends to make all Christian faith the sport of learned caprice, and leaves nothing that is distinctive in it fixed and settled.

Just so the Wellhausen hypothesis has been followed by the still more radical theory that not only the Pentateuch and other historical books are wholly or largely unauthentic, but also that the prophetic writings too are spurious productions of the post-exilic period. The example having been set of letting a theory determine one to accept certain writings as authentic, and to reject others as spurious or unhistorical, according as the exigencies of the theory require, it is no wonder if the lesson is improved on. By making all the Old Testament books fictitious or pseudonymous works, one relieves himself of all the puzzling difficulties which beset other critics. He has no occasion to reconcile one writer with another, nor to explain their differences. He can take, it may be said, each of the Biblical books by itself, and get whatever edification he can out of its fancies or fictions. But certainly few will hold that such a view of the Old Testament is consistent with an earnest Christian faith, even though professed Christians may be found among its advocates.

Now of course it cannot be maintained that, because some men carry their theories to a great extreme, therefore we must needs abide by the traditional view and tolerate no departure from it, however cogent the arguments against it may seem to be. But it must be maintained that theories which make the Bible largely or predominantly unhistorical, legendary, and fictitious in its origin, and represent the introduction of Biblical books into the Canon as accom-

plished by tricks worthy only of unprincipled politicians, must be regarded as presumptively false, as dishonoring to God, and as invalidating the religious authority of Christ. Inasmuch as the arguments for such theories can never claim for themselves demonstrative force, and at the best can be said only to make out a more or less strong probability for the view advocated, it is enough for ordinary Christians to say that any such probability is more than outweighed by the improbability that Christ would have sanctioned a view of the Old Testament which is inconsistent with any such theory, or that God would have allowed the history of his revelation to be vitiated by such frauds and wholesale misrepresentation of facts.

6. It is a precarious resource, when one essays to reconcile his Christian faith with the alleged results of radical criticism by falling back on the general doctrine that, no matter what may be made out as to the origin or authenticity of the Biblical books, at any rate they are all *inspired*.[1] Only, it is said, we may need to reconstruct our theory of inspiration. Well, it is quite true that the theory of Biblical inspiration is not settled. There is no universal agreement as to how much is involved in it, what the nature of the inspiration was, or how far it insured freedom from all error. Perhaps there never will be a theory which all Christians will assent to. But there certainly must be a limit below which the claim of divine inspiration for a book must be disallowed.

[1] This is the general position of the above-mentioned work of Rev. R. F. Horton, *Inspiration and the Bible.*

Even Robertson Smith says,[1] "All sound apologetic admits that the proof that a book is credible must precede belief that it is inspired". How he can reconcile such a principle with his own profession of faith in the inspiration of the Bible, as it is left by the Wellhausen theory, it is for him to explain. But undoubtedly the principle is correct. If a book is essentially incredible, it cannot be inspired in any respectable sense of the word. If, therefore, it is supposed to be proved of any Biblical book that it is full of myths, legends, or falsified history, that it is a deliberate forgery, or that it has been largely interpolated and worked over for the purpose of promoting partisan ends, then it is of little use to say that, being in the Bible, the book must be inspired, the critical discoveries as to the character of the book. however, making it necessary to accommodate our theory of inspiration to the facts. It is very true that we should accommodate our theory of inspiration to the facts; but if the facts are as they are alleged to be, then the only sensible theory of the inspiration of such books is that there is no inspiration in the case at all, or, if any, the inspiration of a lying spirit kindred with the one who is said to have inspired the false prophets in the time of Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 22).

In the case of many men there is much that seems like a subterfuge, when they avow a general belief in the inspiration of the Bible. Men talk as if, by making a sweeping avowal of belief in it, they were thereby securing to themselves full liberty to believe in detail anything whatever that is discreditable to

[1] *L. c.* p. 309.

the Scriptures. In the end, however, the chief discredit, it is to be apprehended, will be found at their own doors. It may be sincerely and honestly meant, when a belief in inspiration is professed alongside of views which appear to put the Bible (in part at least) far below a large proportion of uninspired books; but ordinary men will not be able to see the reasonableness of the profession. It will naturally *seem* like a device to save appearances — to retain the reputation of having a faith in the peculiar working of the Holy Spirit on the minds of the Biblical writers, when in point of fact they believe no such thing. It would be better to abandon all profession of belief in inspiration than to expose the profession to such a construction. It would be doing more honor to the Bible to regard it in general as a trustworthy record of the history of a divine revelation, though written without any peculiar divine inspiration, than to proclaim a general faith in its inspiration, while avowing a disbelief in its general trustworthiness.

7. Faith in Christ and faith in criticism are quite compatible with each other; but the faith in criticism must not be allowed to control the faith in Christ. There is reason to fear that at the present time there is too much disposition to let faith in criticism become the controlling factor. While it is proclaimed that faith in Christ is the fixed thing that cannot be disturbed by critical research, the practical result often is that even the most destructive critical theories are accepted as unquestionable, and faith in Christ is accommodated to them as well as it may be. There may remain indeed a faith in his existence, in his superiority as an ethical teacher, possibly in his sin-

lessness; but faith in his authority and infallibility becomes exceedingly attenuated, or wholly disappears. Whenever the critic and Christ seem to come into collision, Christ is made to give way.

It is true, an attempt is sometimes made to show that the Biblical criticism which overthrows traditional views of the Bible is the means of exalting Christ rather than the opposite. The Bible, it is said, has been honored and believed in rather than Christ. This Bibliolatry needed, therefore, to be overthrown; and this is accomplished by the criticism which mercilessly exposes the errors and weaknesses of the Biblical writers. The Bible as an object of worship and implicit faith being put out of the way, Christ can be put in the place of it and made the object of supreme trust.

Others come to a similar result by a different course. They deprecate bringing Christ into critical discussions at all. They plead that it is a desecration to drag him into this arena of scientific combatants and to attempt to make him an umpire between contending parties.

In both these cases there is an underlying assumption that Christ and the Bible are so distinct that opinions about the one in no way determine opinions about the other. The fallacy of this assumption has already been exposed. No doubt, there is such a thing as Bibliolatry. No doubt, Christ, rather than the Bible, is the object of supreme faith to the Christian. But he who supposes that a criticism which destroys one's confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible can leave one's reverence for Christ unimpaired, must be singularly unable to see things in

their true relation. It may be quite true, as is sometimes remarked, that Christians can be said to believe in the New Testament because of their faith in Christ, rather than in Christ because of their faith in the New Testament. But to say that they *believe* in the New Testament *because of* their faith in Christ is a very different thing from saying that they may *disbelieve* in the New Testament *in spite of* their faith in Christ. The two faiths involve and imply each other; and neither can be overturned without overturning the other.

And when it is said that Christ is too sacred a personage to be dragged into critical controversies, it needs only to be replied that the offense, if there is any, is committed not only by those who rashly adduce Christ's authority against critical opinions, but by those who in their critical discussions do really come into collision with that authority. It avails nothing for the critic to say that he makes no mention of Christ in his researches. So a defender of the Ptolemaic theory of the celestial movements might refrain from all mention of Copernicus; but none the less would he be making an assault on the Copernican theory. And it would be a poor shift for him, in case Copernicus were quoted against him, to protest that Copernicus is too lofty a person to be dragged into such discussions. It is true, the critic may claim that he does not impugn the authority of Christ in matters respecting which Christ really assumes to be an authority. But, to say the least, there may be a difference of opinion on the point, how far his authority extends; and the appeal to him cannot be summarily cut off by the solemn caution that he

is too sacred a being to be introduced into critical discussions of the Bible.

For in truth there is no limit to the particulars in regard to which Biblical critics may affirm that the alleged or actual utterances of Christ are not to be implicitly trusted. Whenever his word appears to conflict with their judgments, it can always be alleged that on such points he was ignorant and mistaken. Even in religious, no less than in secular, matters, whenever there is a collision of opinion between him and them, it may be held that he was limited by the prejudices of his age, so that, though he uttered many excellent sentiments, he cannot be called an infallible authority. In short, instead of being reverenced and trusted as the Son of God, the Light of men, the authoritative Revealer of the divine will and character, the sole Saviour of men, he is thus reduced to the status of a mere man, though probably a rare man, but still a mere man, and a very fallible one at that, whose word cannot be taken when it conflicts with that of those who profess to be experts in Biblical criticism. Manifestly faith in a person of this sort is something quite different from the general faith of Christendom.

This lowering of the standard, this weakening of faith in the great Leader under whom we profess to march, falls in with the tendency of the age to make the doors of the Christian Church very "broad". We sometimes hear it said that the Church should welcome any one who professes to be seeking the truth and recognizes the obligation of morality. There is a great dread of seeming to be exclusive and bigoted. Efforts are made to construct a programme on the

basis of which men of the most diverse beliefs and tastes can unite.

Now there is something winsome in such a catholic spirit. But a church organized on such a basis would not be a genuine Christian Church, even if it should call itself by that name. Such a church would have no room for Christ as its Head; for a large proportion of its members might not acknowledge him as even an authoritative teacher. Such a church would not be founded on Christ. He demands for himself implicit faith and obedience. He does not tell of the broadness of the door through which those are to pass who wish to become his disciples; on the contrary he calls it narrow. His followers must be born again and become as little children. Men are to be convicted of sin because they believe not in him. They are to be judged according to their fidelity to him. He expects to be fully trusted. He professed to be the Son of God and to be invested with authority. But it was not an authority of outward force; it was that of inward worth. He committed his cause to the few who had learned to trust him; but he assured them that they would succeed in establishing his Kingdom only as they proclaimed him to be Lord and Master. His final charge was: "Go, make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the would."

And the growth of the Church has come through the agency of those who preached Jesus as the Lord and the Head. This positive, all-absorbing faith in him, dominating the heart and mind, has been the

power of God unto salvation. Let this faith be toned down and flatted out till Christ no longer remains as the inspiring, commanding, all-sufficient Leader; let him be put into the background, and self-chosen terms of admission into the so-called Church be fixed; and then, though the Church may be very broad, it will be very weak. There will be no well-defined bond of union, no common faith, no single aim, but only a heterogeneous collection of individuals, destined soon to go into dissolution.

We hear much about "the Church of the future" — which means, in the mind of those who use the phrase, the Church as they think it ought to be in the present. But whatever else may or may not be characteristic of the Church of the future, this one must be, if it is to have a triumphant career: it must exalt Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, and the only one through whom men can be saved; it must preach him crucified, risen, and sitting at the right hand of God, as the Redeemer and the King; as the one in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden; as the effulgence of God's glory, and the very image of his substance; as the High Priest through whom we receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Christianity, to be progressive, must be aggressive. Christ "must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." He must be the King of kings and Lord of lords. He brooks no rival in his authority. In these days when much attention is given to ethnic religions, the opinion is sometimes expressed that great injustice has been done to them by stigmatizing

them all as heathen, and overlooking the many excellent traits that are discoverable in them. It seems to be thought, even by some Christians, that Christianity may learn much from these religions, even though it may be on the whole superior to them; and we hear of men being sent out, not as missionaries, but as ambassadors, to confer with the adherents of other religions by way of coming to an understanding with them, rather than for the sake of converting them to a better faith. Now, however amiable this may seem, it is not the Master's programme for evangelizing the world. No doubt, there are admirable features to be found in other religions than the Christian. Whether they are the faded glories of a primeval revelation, or the results of independent aspirations after God, let them have all due recognition. But Christianity has room for all that is truly good; and Christ did not commission his disciples to go into all nations chiefly in order to rail against their religions. But he did bid them to make all nations disciples of *him*, and to teach them to observe *all things* that *he* had commanded them.

The power of Christianity has consisted in the fact that it is a religion embodied in a person — one who is at once a perfect Teacher, Pattern, and Redeemer. Christian scholarship and thought have still a task to do in setting forth the true character of Christ and the true meaning of his work and words. But a scholarship which seeks to sit in judgment on him, assumes to correct and supplement his teachings, and practically sets itself up as higher and more authoritative than he, is not Christian and must come to nought. If the history of Christianity has

proved anything, it has proved that its great advances and conquests have been accomplished only when Christ has been magnified as the one Saviour, as the standard and object of faith, as the infallible Lawgiver and Judge in the kingdom of God which he came to establish. Anything that puts him at all into the background — any attempt to construct a revised Christianity, or a syncretistic religion to which each of the existent religions shall contribute a share, none being pre-eminent and dominant over the others — must certainly end in failure. Christ professed to be *the* Light and *the* Truth; and all who call themselves believers in him, if truly faithful to him, must say with Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Printed by Lippert & Co., Naumburg a/S. Germany.

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